PS 3525
.A565
C3
1918
Copy 1

Class PS3525
Book .A565C3
Copyright No. 1918

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

THE CAPTIVE

A Play in Four Acts

BY

VICTOR MAPES

COPYRIGHT, 1918, BY VICTOR MAPES

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

NEW YORK
SAMUEL FRENCH
PUBLISHER
28-30 WEST 38TH STREET

LONDON
SAMUEL FRENCH, Ltd.
26 SOUTHAMPTON STREET
STRAND

THE CAPTIVE

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

VICTOR MAPES

Copyright, 1918, By Victor Mapes.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

SAMUEL FRENCH
PUBLISHER
28–30 West 38th Street
New York

London
SAMUEL FRENCH, Ltd.
26 Southampton Street
STRAND

PS3525
.A565C3
1918

©CLD 50707

NOV 15 1918

THE CAPTIVE

CAST

ALEXANDER

BESSUS.....*Viceroy of Eastern Persia*

OXYARTES.....*King of Bactra*

BRASIDAS.....*A fat old Macedonian Captain*

SPITAMENES.....*A Persian soldier, companion of Bessus*

EURYLOCUS.....*An old Persian physician*

POLYMON.....*A young and handsome Macedonian officer*

CLITUS
HEPHESTION
PEUCESTAS
LEONNATUS
AMYNTAS
MENIDES
} *Macedonian officers*

IOLAS.....*Alexander's cup-bearer*

PHANUS.....*Ambassador of the Arian King*

DIPHILOS.....*A Macedonian soldier*

KAINOS.....*A Macedonian soldier*

ARISTANDER.....*An aged Macedonian Soothsayer*

ROXANA.....*Daughter of Oxyartes*

EVADNE.....*Her attendant and companion*

XANTIPPA.....*A Persian woman*

Macedonian Officers, Guards, Attendants, Messengers, Slaves, Cup-bearers, Musicians, etc. Dancing Girls, Women Captives, Persian soldiers, etc., etc.

SYNOPSIS OF ACTS

ACT I

SCENE I: The "Greek" and the Persian
(A wooded spot outside of Bactra in Persia)

SCENE 2: The Captive.
(The same set—ten days later)

ACT II

SCENE I: The Voice of Love
(Terrace of the Palace, by moonlight)

SCENE 2: The Poison
(An isolated spot in the woods)

SCENE 3: The Antidote
(Banquet Hall in the Palace)

ACT III

All is Won and All is Lost
(Terrace by moonlight, same as Act II)

ACT IV

SCENE I: The Assault.
(Outside the walls of the Mallian Rock)

SCENE 2: Alexander—the Great
(Inside the walls of the Mallian Rock)

THE CAPTIVE

ACT I

SCENE I

SCENE: *A wooded spot, with a rising hill or knoll up-stage and a view of mountainous country in the distance. To Right, half-way up-stage is the entrance of a small hut. Some stumps and a fallen log or two to serve as seats.*

TIME: Bright sunshine.

DISCOVERED: Some PERSIAN GUARDS, *in rich uniform, enter* R. I E. *and draw back up-stage a little, as enter* OXYARTES, *a dignified and richly costumed old man—the King of Bactra. He is accompanied by* PHANUS, *an ambassador from a neighboring kingdom.*

OXYARTES. This is the hut of old Eurylocus. For more than fifty years he's been our chief physician and our trusted friend at the court of Bactra.

AMBASSADOR. His name, O King, is not unknown even to us Arians.

OXYARTES. My daughter, Roxana, is the joy and care of his declining years. A strange ambition

has possessed the girl, to learn the secrets of his art. Together they pass the days here in the woods gathering herbs and plants, and discussing all the ills that mortal flesh is heir to.

AMBASSADOR. 'Twill please my King to hear of this.

OXYARTES. Ah?

AMBASSADOR. His eldest son, Prince Hargus, has reached the marrying age.

OXYARTES. Prince Hargus is a noble youth.

AMBASSADOR. I am charged to ask for him your daughter's hand.

OXYARTES. Such a proposal from Arsames honors me and mine. But now it is impossible.

AMBASSADOR. Impossible?

OXYARTES. The grace of the gods has fallen on my daughter. She has won the love of the greatest in the land—the mighty viceroy of all our kingdoms here.

AMBASSADOR. Bessus?

OXYARTES. Bessus. If Darius' little son should die, which the gods forbid—: none other stands between Bessus and the great throne of all Persia.

AMBASSADOR. ——When is the wedding ceremony?

OXYARTES. I cannot tell 'till Bessus comes again. Our Emperor, Darius, as doubtless you have heard, went forth from Babylon some two months ago, to crush the Macedonian upstart, Alexander. Bessus went with him.

AMBASSADOR. We heard in Aria that the Macedonian army, numbered less than thirty thousand men.

OXYARTES. It seems incredible with so small a force he should have gained one foot of Persian soil. But Alexander is young, and like a savage beast,

he's plunged ahead to sure destruction. Darius' army, so Bessus said, would number near a million men when he set out from Babylon.

AMBASSADOR. You've had no news since then?

OXYARTES. The distance is great—Still I wonder that no word has come.

GUARD. (*Entering* R. I E.) A messenger comes in great haste from the palace!

OXYARTES. Ah? (*Enter Messenger* R. I E.) Speak, what news?

MESSENGER. The mighty viceroy Bessus approaches Bactra—He sends greetings to your majesty.

OXYARTES. Bessus! Come, Phanus! We must welcome him!

(*Exeunt Guards,* OXYARTES, AMBASSADOR R. I E. *Enter* EURYLOCUS L., *followed by* EVADNE *who carries a small basket of herbs. He crosses to* R. C., *and sits on stump.*)

EURYLOCUS. (*As he enters*) Come, my children,—we've done enough to-day. We'll rest and sort our herbs.

ROXANA. (*Off* L.) Eurylocus!

EURYLOCUS. (*Sitting and turning*) Well—what now?

EVADNE. Roxana calls you—she has found another herb. (*Looking off* L.)

ROXANA. (*Off* L.) Eurylocus!

EURYLOCUS. (*Calling off*) Aye! Aye! Bring it here!

EVADNE. (*Going off* L., *and speaking off as she goes*) What is it you have found? (ROXANA *enters* L., *excitedly and triumphantly, holding an herb in her hand.* EVADNE *follows her on*)

ROXANA. Eurylocus! (*She goes toward him*)

EURYLOCUS. Well—Roxana?

ROXANA. (*To* EURYLOCUS) Spitamenes is her lover.

EURYLOCUS. Oh—young Spitamenes, the Sogdian,—the companion of great Bessus.

ROXANA. (*To* EVADNE) 'Tis more important you should know about the antidote.

EVADNE. Anti-dote?

ROXANA. (*Nodding*) I'll show you that—It's not so difficult to find. (*She looks in her basket and takes out herb*) See——

EURYLOCUS. That is the Komana.

ROXANA. That can make this poison harmless. It is not so, Eurylocus? (EURYLOCUS *nods. To* EVADNE) I'll show you how it is prepared.

EVADNE. What for?

ROXANA. Why then, in case Eurylocus, or I, or some one else should poison your lover, you'.l know the way to save his life.

EURYLOCUS. Sixty years ago this poison freed us from the Scythian King—when he had plundered half our land. He drank the fever in his wine. Our King, Roxana's grandfather, drank likewise of the wine, but no harm came to him.

ROXANA. (*To* EVADNE) You see he took the anti-dote afterwards.

EVADNE Who did a'l that?

EURYLOCUS. (*Taking up the baskets of herbs*) Among the captives of the Scythian King one was my mother. She was his favorite slave and poured the wine. Before she died, years afterwards, she told the secret to me, that good might come of it—as I have done to you. (*He goes into hut with the baskets of herbs*)

EVADNE. Let's speak no more of poison, or I shall surely dream of it.

ROXANA. There's something else that you would rather dream about—I know. I heard you in your

sleep, last night, murmuring: "Spitamenes"—"Spitamenes"!——

EVADNE. I'm not ashamed to say that Spitamenes pleases me. You are to be the wife of Bessus and I hope to be no less to Spitamenes.

ROXANA. (*Protesting*) Evadne!——

EVADNE. I know—you pucker up your lips, so often as I mention Bessus' name. But I am not deceived, Roxana.

ROXANA. You are mistaken, Evadne. I have no desire to marry.

EVADNE. Now I smile!

ROXANA. Truly I have not. I am very happy here in Bactra—with my father's love and yours, and old Eurylocus! I ask for nothing more.

EVADNE. You do not wish to sit beside Bessus on his throne?

ROXANA. I shudder when I think of it. He is our mighty viceroy, I know, and what he wills—'tis our duty to obey. My father wills it, too. I know not what to say to my father. "I do not wish to marry"—he laughs at that. "I feel no love for Bessus—nor for any man"—he laughs again and tells me love will come with time. I only know that I was wretched while Bessus stayed in Bactra as often as he looked at me.

EVADNE. I cannot make you out—Now with me, it's so different. A man might be tall or short, fat or lean; but provided he was a king or a great warrior with chariots and palaces to offer me, I could close my eyes directly and feel great love for him.

ROXANA. Evadne—what will be—will be. (*A flare of trumpets is heard off* R. ROXANA *starts*) What is that?

(EVADNE *runs to the top of the hill and looks off* R. ROXANA *follows her up a little.* EVADNE

displays great excitement as she sees someone approaching.)

EVADNE. (*Calling to* ROXANA *in an excited whisper*) Roxana! (*She runs down to* ROXANA *and touches her arm*) Roxana—Spitamenes and Bessus!

ROXANA. (*Under her breath*) What? (*She makes a move to go up.* EVADNE *checks her and motions* R. 1 E., *as some Persian Guards enter and stand to one side, followed by a Herald*)

HERALD. (*Announcing*) His Majesty, the viceroy, Bessus. (*He steps to one side, as* BESSUS *enters, followed by* SPITAMENES. *Both are dressed in rich Persian costumes, without armor. More Guards follow and remain* R. BESSUS *sees* ROXANA *and moves to* R. C., *where he stops, gazing at her*)

BESSUS. Roxana! (ROXANA *and* EVADNE *incline low before* BESSUS, *while* SPITAMENES *does likewise, saluting* ROXANA) Nay—raise your head that I may look at you.

ROXANA. (*Raising her head*) Sire——

BESSUS. Now I see you and my heart is satisfied.

ROXANA. I am much surprised at your sudden coming. I—You have seen my father?

(EURYLOCUS *comes out of hut and stands up-stage, looking on.*)

BESSUS. Yes, Roxana. Your father is giving orders to his soldiers. He sets out from Bactra before night.

ROXANA. What has happened, then?

BESSUS. The Macedonian—Alexander—has won another victory.

ROXANA. Against our King of kings?

BESSUS. Darius sought safety in flight, and his

army seized with panic, met its fate in general destruction.

ROXANA. This Alexander, then, is he invincible?

BESSUS. Have no fear, Roxana. He's dizzy now with the blood he's spilled. He does not see the doom that waits for him.

ROXANA. How can you hope to conquer him?

BESSUS. We'll capture him alive—we'll put him in a cage—we'll wreak a vengeance on his flesh so lingering and so terrible that he alone will die a hundred thousand deaths and pay the count of all the Persians he has slain. I will do it, or cease to call me Bessus.

ROXANA. He is a monster and I hate him so, that I could wish to see him mangled in a cage!

BESSUS. You have not yet heard all. (*He turns to Guards and waves them back*) Withdraw! (*He turns to* SPITAMENES) Spitamenes, await me at the palace. We wish to be alone.

(*All go off.* SPITAMENES *goes up* R. C., *and waits for* EVADNE. *She shows hesitation and looks to* ROXANA. BESSUS *motions her to go and she goes out with* SPITAMENES *over hill. After they are gone,* BESSUS *goes to* ROXANA *and takes her hand.*)

BESSUS. Roxana?—Are you afraid to be alone with me——?

ROXANA. (*Withdrawing her hand and recoiling a little, but meeting his gaze, firmly*) What is this other news that you have come to tell me?——

BESSUS. The news is great, Roxana,—'twill shake all Persia when all Persia knows. 'Tis too soon now for that. Besides, it pleases me that you should be the first to hear—Darius' little son was with the baggage train which fell as plunder to the Macedonians. He is no more.

ROXANA. (*In despair*) Oh!

BESSUS. He was the only one that stood between me and the great throne of Persia—That is not all. Prepare yourself. Darius, our great Emperor, has ceased to be. I, Bessus, am the King of kings!—— (ROXANA *looks at him with a sort of holy awe, then mechanically she sinks down, in a shrinking way, and prostrates herself according to the Persian custom, before the King of kings*) Rise, Roxana, you forget you are my promised wife—and soon to be all Persia's Queen of queens. I love you, Roxana, and I want you mine—more ardently than I want this mighty name that makes me lord of all. I burn to hold you in my arms! (*He seizes her hands*—ROXANA *withdraws them, shrinking*)

ROXANA. No—sire—no—I beg of you. (BESSUS *straightens himself haughtily*) I cannot accept your love—I——

BESSUS. You cannot! Why?

ROXANA. 'Tis nothing, sire. I—I am bewildered. All this you've told me—I——

BESSUS. You are my promised wife. I am your king. I love you. Have I no right to touch your hand?

ROXANA. Be patient with me, sire. It is a favor I will thank you for. Speak not of love to-day.

(BESSUS *looks at her, turns away a step—nettled—then turns back and bows to her with a gesture of submission.*)

BESSUS. What then?

ROXANA. My father and his army—do they go against the Macedonians?

BESSUS. No. The Macedonians have doubtless gone to Babylon. There, I expect they'll stay a month to nurse their wounds and glorify themselves with feasts and drunkenness. Before that time

has passed, I'll have an army that will twice match theirs. The Mallian Rock is, as you know, the greatest fortress of this land and we will have it doubly fortified. 'Tis there that we will dig their graves for them. There I will show you Alexander in a cage.

ROXANA. My father goes there now?

BESSUS. He goes to take command of all the Mallians.

ROXANA. Then what of me and all our people here? Do we go with him, too?

BESSUS. Your father and his soldiers go alone. So it is arranged.

(*Enter* OXYARTES R. 1 E., *in warlike attire.*)

OXYARTES. My commands are given, Bessus.

BESSUS. So soon?

OXYARTES. When the trumpet calls, we go—You have spoken to Roxana?—What is your will as to the ceremony?

ROXANA. (*Dismayed*) Ceremony?

OXYARTES. (*Looking from one to the other*) How's this? You have not told her yet what we had planned? (BESSUS *gives a glance towards* ROXANA, *and signifies by a gesture to* OXYARTES *that he has not yet broached the matter to* ROXANA. OXYARTES *looks from one to the other and smiles at* BESSUS *indulgently*) Is it so? I see— A king in love is like a common swain.

BESSUS. She would not have me tell her of my love, to-day.

OXYARTES. (*Turns slowly and looks at* ROXANA *with surprise and reproach, yet gently*) Roxana— (*She hangs her head a minute, then glides to him in a trembling, fearsome way and buries her head on his breast*)

ROXANA. Father!——

(OXYARTES *strokes her head gently.*)

OXYARTES. (*To* ROXANA, *gently*) There—there——(*He exchanges glances with* BESSUS. BESSUS *makes a sign that he will withdraw.* OXYARTES *nods his head in assent, and signifies that he will speak to* ROXANA *alone and all will be well.* BESSUS *goes out* R. I E.) Roxana—look at me—what is the trouble, child?

(ROXANA *lifts her head and sees that* BESSUS *has gone.*)

ROXANA. When you set out to-day, take me with you! Don't leave me here behind!

OXYARTES. I and my soldiers must travel far and fast, to rouse the country against this Macedonian. A woman could not go with us.

ROXANA. I want to go with *you!*

OXYARTES. Later on, if all is well, and we hold safe the Mallian Rock, then you may come and join me there,—if Bessus wills it so.

ROXANA. Bessus?——

OXYARTES. Bessus will remain a day or two in Bactra, here, to await a messenger with news from Babylon. Then he will go to raise his standard among the Sogdians who are assembling now all through the North. There is no danger here—the Macedonian's next attack will be against the Mallian Rock.

ROXANA. Then I must remain here?

OXYARTES. That must be as Bessus says. 'Tis his wish, as well as mine, that you should be his wife to-day.

ROXANA. (*Shrinking*) Father! Not to-day!

OXYARTES. Why not to-day?

ROXANA. I must have time—I—Father, I am your daughter. Don't force me, now. To-day may

be the last time I shall ever see you. (OXYARTES *makes a gesture of impatience*) Father—we cannot tell—it may. You are going far away—to battle with the bloody Alexander.

OXYARTES. 'Tis better I should see you married, then, before I go.

ROXANA. Father—I do not wish to marry Bessus——(OXYARTES *makes a movement*)—now—today—I have not learned to love him yet. I only ask a little time.

OXYARTES. I love you, Roxana, and I would never wish to force you wrongfully. But Bessus has my word. If I go now, and leave you here a maid, will you give me your word that whether I live or whether I die, you will marry Bessus?

ROXANA. If we should never meet again, I promise you, because you will it so, that no one else but Bessus will ever call me wife.

OXYARTES. (*Raising his hand*) By Phoebus—you swear?

ROXANA. By Phoebus, I swear.

OXYARTES. And if you break that solemn oath—

ROXANA. (*Going to his arms*) Father!——

OXYARTES. I love you, Roxana,—so you must have your way.

ROXANA. Take me with you!

OXYARTES. That cannot be. I'll join Bessus now, and tell him what we have agreed. (*He starts to go* R. I E.)

ROXANA. (*Calling*) Father!——(*She rushes to him*)

OXYARTES. Roxana! My daughter! (*He kisses her and goes out* R. I E.)

(ROXANA *looks after* OXYARTES *a moment. Then she walks back* C., *slowly, thinking. She sits down on stump, rests her chin in her hands, staring on the ground before her. After a time*

she rouses herself, looks about, rises and goes up stage a little, in a hesitating way. She looks toward hut R., *with a new thought and goes to the door. She opens door and enters. Then re-appears in the door, looking about undecided, she moves* C., *calling.*)

ROXANA. (*Calling*) Eurylocus! (*She pauses for an answer, then goes to top of hill and looks off. She turns about on hill and calls again*) Eurylocus! (*Receiving no answer, she goes off over hill and is heard calling again after she is out of sight. Off up* R., *calling in distance*) Eurylocus!——

(*The stage is silent a moment, then low sounds of tramping horses breaking twigs, and clinking armor are heard off* L., *with the noise of voices. Then* ALEXANDER *enters* L., *in a cautious way leading his horse. He wears light armor. He sees the hut, turns and enjoins silence on his men, with a gesture, then he turns his horse's head* L., *and hands the bridle to* HEPHESTION *who appears* L., *with* AMYNTAS. *He motions them to lead the horse out of sight, and they disappear with the horse.* ALEXANDER *goes to the hut, looks in the window, sees no one, goes to the door and knocks, opens door and looks in. Then he comes down and peers* R., *then goes up the knoll crouching cautiously, then standing up boldly and taking in the view.* HEPHESTION, AMYNTAS *and* CLITUS *appear at the edge of the woods* L., *while other Soldiers can be seen through the trees behind them at a short distance* ALEXANDER *turns down a step and calls to them in a low voice.*)

ALEXANDER. Hephestion! Amyntas! Clitus! (*He waves them to come and they go to join him*

on the hill) There is a city here—(*They stand on hill and look off, while the other Soldiers at edge of wood, advance a little and stand* L., *looking toward* ALEXANDER. *He comes down* R. C., *thinking. The others follow him down*) One thing is sure—Bessus has escaped us. If he came East, this way, as we suppose he did, he may be safe enough within this city's walls—What say you, Amyntas?

AMYNTAS. We have with us less than two hundred men—There's nothing we can do against a town.

ALEXANDER. (*Thinking*) No.

AMYNTAS. Our horses are tired. 'Twill take us three days at least to reach our army's camp again.

ALEXANDER. Bessus has escaped us!

HEPHESTION. What proof have we that he came here? He may have fled still further north among the Sogdians.

ALEXANDER. Yes——

AMYNTAS. The greatest obstacle that still stands in our path is not Bessus, but the warlike Mallians and their fortress town,—far down towards the South.

ALEXANDER. That may be, but Bessus is a regicide—he murdered Darius who was his King. I must lay my hands on Bessus first of all, because he must not live to boast that he has killed a King.

CLITUS. How can we tell there is no mountain road from here by which he could go South and reach the Mallians?

ALEXANDER. (*After a moment's thought*) My plans are made. I'll send Philotas with one-third our force to hold all roads that lie between here and the Mallians. Craterus with another force shall circle to the North and block communication with the Sogdians. Meanwhile, we will bring back

here with us the remaining third and take this town. We may get news of Bessus, then, and we will know which way to march against him.

(ROXANA'S *voice is heard faintly off in the distance calling* EURYLOCUS.)

ROXANA. (*Off up* R., *in the distance, calling faintly*) Eurylocus!——

ALEXANDER. (*Moving up a step*) Hark! (*He listens, then motions his men to withdraw. As they go* L., *out of sight in the woods, he calls.* HEPHESTION *to remain, in a whisper*) Hephestion! (*He motions* HEPHESTION *to stay with him as he goes up the hill cautiously and peers off. He sees* ROXANA *with a start and a thrill of pleasure*) Hephestion! (HEPHESTION *goes as if to look.* ALEXANDER *lays a hand upon him and keeps him back*) Keep from sight—It is a lonely maid—she comes this way.

ROXANA. (*Calling again off up* R.) Eurylocus!——

ALEXANDER. She's like a wood nymph—gliding through the trees. She comes this way—keep back—Hephestion! She's beautiful! She is more beautiful than any woman that I ever saw!—Out of sight! (*He withdraws* HEPHESTION *with him out of sight behind a tree, and peers out keeping* HEPHESTION *back, as* ROXANA *enters over the top of the hill. She stops and looks about listening, as if she had heard something. She comes down and moves* L. C., *looking off and calling in a half-hesitating way*)

ROXANA. (*Calling off* L.) Eurylocus!

(ALEXANDER *waves* HEPHESTION *back out of sight* R. HEPHESTION *disappears.* ALEXANDER *steps out* R. C., *and stands looking at* ROXANA. *She*

turns and sees him—stifles a cry—and stands gazing at him in startled wonderment. A long pause; they stand looking at each other. With ALEXANDER *it is almost a case of love at first sight.*)

ALEXANDER. (*Gently*) Be not afraid——

ROXANA. (*Still staring at him*) You startled me—I——

ALEXANDER. I will not harm you.

ROXANA. You must be a Greek.

ALEXANDER. I'd rather be your friend—Could I be that and be a Greek?

ROXANA. You are a Greek, I'm sure!

ALEXANDER. And is it such a dreadful thing to be a Greek?

ROXANA. I never saw a Greek before.

ALEXANDER. Indeed? That's strange—and yet my case is stranger still—For I have travelled very far—I've visited a hundred peoples each with a different name——

ROXANA. You look too young. It is not easy to believe that you could do so much.

ALEXANDER. Well, I have travelled as I said—and yet I cannot swear I ever met a maid like you before.

ROXANA. I dare say we are different from the Greeks, but we're no different from the Sogdians, or the Mallians, or the Arians.

ALEXANDER. Indeed? How are your people called?

ROXANA. I am a Bactrian.

ALEXANDER. A Bactrian? And this great city that lies in view from the knoll—how is that called?

ROXANA. That is Bactra—but it is not great.

ALEXANDER. Ah? Not great?

ROXANA. (*Suspiciously*) How came you here

and why have you come?—if you are ignorant of our town and all concerning it?

ALEXANDER. Why have I come? I'm afraid you wouldn't believe me if I told you that.

ROXANA. Why would I not believe you—if you told the truth?

ALEXANDER. The truth is sometimes very difficult to tell. My mission here, you see, is a sort of secret one. If you would know my secrets,—first you must tell me some of yours. (ROXANA *looks at him with growing suspicion*)—What is your name?

ROXANA. (*Not answering him*) I think I understand why you are here, alone. You ran away from the battle—you are one of those the panic seized.

ALEXANDER. What battle was that?

ROXANA. I know Darius hired many Greeks to fight for him against the Macedonian.

ALEXANDER. Those Greeks were traitors—and so they met their death. They merited no mercy and Alexander showed them none.

ROXANA. Alexander is a monster!

ALEXANDER. Indeed? Why do you think that?

ROXANA. What is he else?

ALEXANDER. I've heard he was a mild and generous man—a young man, too—and now he thinks himself a conqueror and means to rule all Persia as a wise and mighty king.

ROXANA. He is not yet and he will never be our conqueror. When he attacks the Mallians—they'll capture him alive and put him in a cage. And if I see him there I will not pity him.

ALEXANDER. Poor Alexander!

ROXANA. They say he has no mercy now for any one. The sight of all the blood he's spilled has maddened him.

ALEXANDER. Well—now I promise I will tell him every word that you have said.

ROXANA. (*Aghast*) Tell him? You?!

ALEXANDER. It may be you will make him mend his monstrous ways.

ROXANA. You're jesting!

ALEXANDER. No. I am on my way to join the Macedonians.

ROXANA. Oh, you're baser, then, than I supposed you were!

ALEXANDER. I would not have you think too ill of me, for I think well of you.

ROXANA. I'm sure you only meant to startle me when you pretended you would go among our enemies.

ALEXANDER. What would you have me do? Can I stay here?

ROXANA. I think you would be welcome in our town, if you went boldly to the gates and offered your sword against the Macedonians. Tell them truthfully you ran away from the battle because the panic seized you—and——

ALEXANDER. No panic ever seized me and I did not run away.

ROXANA. You did not run away?

ALEXANDER. No. Nor did I ever fight against the Macedonians. The monstrous Alexander has always been my friend.

ROXANA. (*Proudly*) Then you are not welcome here!—There lies the way to Babylon!

ALEXANDER. (*Playfully*) Since I've seen you, I have no wish to go away *alone*.

ROXANA. You are an enemy. I have but to warn my people who are near and nothing then could save your life.—Now go.

ALEXANDER. You're full of spirit—Tell me your name?—(ROXANA *eyes him defiantly, then she edges off a little—giving a swift glance about as if prepar-*

ing to run. ALEXANDER *divines her thought instantly*) Don't run away! (*He doesn't move. She looks at him, dominated by his voice, but still ready to run*) I'd have to stop you. I never fail to catch an enemy who ran. Don't try to run away.

ROXANA. (*Alarmed*) You will not let me go?

ALEXANDER. Not yet. There are some things that I would ask you first.

ROXANA. You are a coward then and I despise you! If I were a man I'd kill you where you stand!

ALEXANDER. I'm glad you are no man, but if you were, I wouldn't fear you half so much as I do now.

ROXANA. (*Scornfully*) Indeed!

ALEXANDER. Suppose I let you go? How could I be sure you would not warn the soldiers of the town?

ROXANA. I'd tell them—yes, I would! Your fears are right.

ALEXANDER. You see—And they could follow me—they'd trace my flight—and they might catch me, too.

ROXANA. It would not take them long—they have swift horses.

ALEXANDER. Well then—How can I let you go?—You see I like you very much—I meant to treat you kindly. I said I would not harm you—you remember?—That was a promise, and if you knew me better, you would know I never break my word.

ROXANA. Well?

ALEXANDER. (*Playfully*—ROXANA *gazes at him through this speech—frightened, half fascinated and yet defiant*) Did I promise you I would not carry you away with me? No—And now you seem to force me to it. Perhaps you'd like to go with me, in spite of all you've said? I'd take you as a priceless gift to Alexander. 'Twould please him to see your eyes flash up—as they flash at me now. And you could tell him all the flattering things you think

of him. 'Twould do him good. Tell him, about the Mallians—how they mean to put him in a cage. Your lips give to those things so sweet a sound, I'm sure it would delight our Alexander's ears. Shall I take you? Tell me——?

ROXANA. You will have to bind me first and carry me by force. You cannot take me far! I'm sure you will be caught and killed before the sun goes down.

ALEXANDER. I would gladly take the risk,—for Alexander's sake—But still I would not wish to bind you and use force. I'd rather serve you than offend you. (ROXANA *looks at him defiantly. He pauses, moves away a little, thinking, then looks at her quizzically*)—Suppose I leave you as I found you and ride away as swiftly as I can?—Would you consider that a kindness?—and would you scorn me less than you do now? (ROXANA *gives him a quick, searching look, then looks down. He pauses a moment, then speaks more gently and tenderly—going to her*)—Answer me—(*She gives a little nod of her head without looking up*)—Well, you are free to go. I will not stop you now. (*She starts across in front of him without looking at him*) One moment. (*She stops*) I'd rather that your people did not know you saw me here. It would alarm them and it might do more. The soldiers might pursue me—and well—they might go too far and Alexander might have to kill them.

ROXANA. Alexander is many hundred miles away from here—in Babylon.

ALEXANDER. Is he so far away?

ROXANA. You could not hope to reach him.

ALEXANDER. Then I would have to turn and fight——

ROXANA. They would kill you—that is all.

ALEXANDER. Well—even so—I'd rather they should not do that—unless you wish it very much?

(ROXANA *turns and looks at him slowly.*)

ROXANA. I will not tell them.

ALEXANDER. That's very generous—to treat an enemy so—a coward, too, that you despise.

ROXANA. I do not think you are a coward.

ALEXANDER. Ah?

ROXANA. And I am sorry you are bound to be our enemy and fight for such a bloody king as Alexander—Farewell.

ALEXANDER. I think that you and I will meet again—when I come back with Alexander. (*She straightens herself and gives him a quick look of defance.*) Oh, yes, since you will not let me take you to him, I'll have to bring him here to you.

ROXANA. When Alexander marches East he'll march to battle with the Mallians. And you and I will never meet again.

ALEXANDER. (*She makes a move to go*) Before you go, there's another favor I would ask—It's very little—just one word—that I would like to carry with me on my journey—I'd like to know your name. (ROXANA *looks at him, then looks away, then shakes her head with firmness.* ALEXANDER *goes to her*) You will not tell me? (*She shakes her head*) No? Very well. (*He takes her hand. She turns on him, gives him an indignant look, draws her hand away and runs out* R. I E. ALEXANDER *looks after her a moment in admiration, until she is supposed to be hidden from his sight, then he goes quickly to the top of the hill, calling as he goes to top of the hill*) Hephestion! Hephestion! (HEPHESTION *joins him on the hill*) Look Hephestion! Look! See where she goes!—Ah! She's gone—Hephestion, did you see her well? Is she not wonderful? (CLITUS, AMYNTAS, POLYMON *and other soldiers appear* L.) This day shall be a day of fete in ages yet to come. And on this spot I'll build a glorious temple, of

gold and alabaster—a monument to Venus and the Gods of Love! Your King at last has found his conqueror!—And now to horse!——

Curtain.

END OF ACT I. SCENE I.

SCENE II

The scene represents the same spot as before—the principal change being that a canopy tent is erected L. *This is* ALEXANDER'S *tent and is so constructed that it has in front a raised platform with a throne chair on it over which is rigged a panoply. Behind this is the tent proper which is enterd by an opening below platform. The materials of the tent are rich Oriental stuffs and the tent poles, etc., are richly sculptured and gilded.*

At the rise of the curtain, a number of royal slaves are busy finishing the erection of the tent, carrying rugs, seats, golden bowls, etc., etc., into it—making it ready for ALEXANDER'S *occupancy.* BRASIDAS, *a rotund and ruddy old Macedonian captain, is in charge of the operations. Several royal Guards and Attendants in rich costumes hold stations about the stage. Two or three Macedonian Officers in full armor are on the knoll, looking off up* R., *in the direction of the city and making comments in an undertone. A couple of soldiers stand guard at the entrance to the hut* R., *and below them* R., *are four or six soldiers looking dusty and heated from exertion who have in charge two or three*

Persian women as captives. These stand shrinking from the soldiers who have them in charge. Meanwhile from the distance, on all sides, are heard confused noises and clamor. Four slaves enter L., *bearing a heavy roll of rugs which they place down before the platform and start to untie. Two other slaves have brought a long narrow rug which they spread out through the doorway. Another slave with a pole in his hand goes about the outside of the canopy straightening the stuff. Another slave with a gold pitcher enters the tent and, later, comes out again.*

BRASIDAS. (*Growling at them all*) Don't go to sleep! Make haste I say! (*The slaves begin talking to each other, giving directions where to place things.* BRASIDAS *roars at them*) Silence! Silence! If any words are to be spoken here, I, Brasidas, will speak them!

(*A* SOLDIER *comes to him from* R.)

SOLDIER. Captain——

BRASIDAS. (*Turning savagely*) Well—what now.

SOLDIER. Here are some women captives.

BRASIDAS. More women? Humph! Some more scarecrows, I suppose?

SOLDIER. That is for you to say.

BRASIDAS. Just so. That is for me to say. No one here can even say say that a woman is ugly. I, Brasidas, must tell them. No one can show a slave where a tent-peg is to go—where a hole is to be dug in the ground. I, Brasidas, must tell them. And so while other officers ride prancing steeds through a captured town and plunder houses and ravish lovely maids,—I, Brasidas, must spend my time swearing

at slaves, or peering into the faces of old women. That is the reward I get for dancing Alexander on my knee when he was a boy and teaching him the art of war. (BRASIDAS *looks at women and signifies that they are ugly*)

(DIPHILOS *enters* L., *and greets* BRASIDAS. *He carries a wine-skin slung from his shoulder.*)

DIPHILOS. Ho! Brasidas! What is wrong with you?

BRASIDAS. What is wrong with me? I'll tell you what is wrong!

DIPHILOS. Well?

BRASIDAS. I'll tell you—(*Seeing wine-skin*) No. my tongue is dry as leather—I cannot tell you—unless by chance there's a drop or two left in your wine-skin?

DIPHILOS. Have what you will. (*He undoes his wine-skin and hands it to* BRASIDAS)

BRASIDAS. Ho! You are not Diphilos, but the god of plenty! (*He drinks and utters a deep sigh of satisfaction*) Ha-a-a—! An excellent god he is, too, as you will live to learn—when you're as old and as wise as I am. (*He drinks again and repeats his sigh of satisfaction*) Ha-a-a-a! (*He hands back the wine-skin to* DIPHILOS)

DIPHILOS. Now, what is wrong?

BRASIDAS. Why now—nothing is wrong.

DIPHILOS. (*Looking* R.) What are these women?

BRASIDAS. That's true!—the women!—(*To soldiers*) Away with them!—(*Soldiers lead women off Right*)

DIPHILOS. What is the meaning of this procedure?

BRASIDAS. There is a certain woman who should be in this town. Alexander once laid eyes on her—how or when—I may not say. The question resolves itself to this: we must find her.

DIPHILOS. What is her name?

BRASIDAS. We know not.

DIPHILOS. What is her condition?

BRASIDAS. Again, we know not. But she is young and she is beautiful—at least so Alexander described her. The order was that all women captives should be brought before me and when I find one who might pass for young and beautiful, I keep her for Alexander to inspect.

DIPHILOS. And have you found her?

BRASIDAS. How can I tell? I have some half a dozen or so who are not bad to look at. We will see what Alexander says.

DIPHILOS. Where are those beauties then?

BRASIDAS. They are here, inside. (*He indicates hut*)

DIPHILOS. By all means, let me see them!

BRASIDAS. I do not boast of them—but you may see them, if you like. Come. (*Exeunt* BRASIDAS *and* DIPHILOS *into hut* R)

(*Two soldiers,* POLYMON *and* KAINOS, *enter* R., *carrying* EVADNE *on a shield between them.*)

KAINOS. Here is the King's tent.

POLYMON. Well, then, place her down. (*They set her down and she stands, supporting herself on* POLYMON'S *arm*) How does your ankle now? (EVADNE *goes to walk a step or two and limps*)

EVADNE. It hurts me to stand.—Must I stand?

POLYMON. You shall sit here.

KAINOS. (*Taking hold of her*) Sit here! (*They both help her to sit*)

POLYMON. Keep your hands off her—I say! She is mine!

KAINOS. I seized her first and I mean to keep her.

POLYMON. My right comes first!

KAINOS. I will not give her up. (*He goes to lay his hand upon her*)

POLYMON. (*Putting hand to sword*) Hands off! I say!

BRASIDAS. (*Who has entered from hut, followed by* DIPHILOS) Ho! What's this?

KAINOS. I seized her first. Now, Polymon would c'aim her!

POLYMON. And I'll make good my claim!

BRASIDAS. Stand back, both of you! This must be as the King wills, and I, Brasidas, will judge of it. (*To* EVADNE) Stand up! How dare you sit in my presence?

EVADNE. (*Eyeing* BRASIDAS *coyly*) You needn't roar so! I know you wouldn't harm me!

BRASIDAS. (*Roaring*) Don't be too sure!

EVADNE. Oh—I'm sure you have a kind heart—though you do roar at me.

BRASIDAS. No nonsense! Stand up!

EVADNE. But I hurt my ankle—see, this one—it pains me to stand on it. See how it's swollen. (BRASIDAS *looks at her feet admiringly. Then he exchanges glances knowingly with* DIPHILOS *and coughs. Then he glances back at* EVADNE *with growing interest. She looks up at him, sideways, indicating* POLYMON) He didn't treat me as you do.

BRASIDAS. I didn't know about your ankle.

EVADNE. Now you speak gently. I like you better. I will do whatever you bid me. (*She goes to rise—pretends to be in pain—turning to* POLYMON)—Your arm, please. (POLYMON *goes to move forward.* BRASIDAS *intercepts him, in a thundering voice*)

BRASIDAS. Stand back!—(*He goes to support* EVADNE. *She takes hold of his arm and gets close to him*)

EVADNE. (*Smiling up at him*) Oh—thank you. I knew you had a kind heart.

BRASIDAS. (*Glancing down at her*) You are young and you have a certain something—but the question is, are you beautiful?

EVADNE. (*Pretending to be offended*) Oh! (*She leaves go of* BRASIDAS's *arm, and throws a glance at* POLYMON)

BRASIDAS. What say you, Diphilos? (DIPHILOS *answers with a shrug*) She is not precisely beautiful. But still it is a nice question. Under the circumstances—(*He looks over at* POLYMON *and* KAINOS) I withhold my judgment. (*To* EVADNE) What is your name?

EVADNE. Evadne.

BRASIDAS. I am Brasidas. You have the good fortune to please Brasidas. Come with me.

POLYMON. Brasidas—I claim her and I will have her.

KAINOS. My claim is first!

BRASIDAS. Silence! When the time comes, who shall say that Brasidas has no claim? Evadne, come with me. (*He offers his arm, which she takes with a half-smiling, half reluctant glance at* POLYMON) Come, Diphilos. (BRASIDAS *with* EVADNE *on his arm, starts toward hut, accompanied by* DIPHILOS)

(*A flare of trumpets sounds out from* R., *and Guards enter over knoll in full armor carrying lances and clear the stage.*)

GUARDS. (*As they clear stage*) Make way! Alexander comes! Make way for Alexander!

(*Some more Soldiers and Officers enter over knoll and* R., *and stand to one side, working up entrance for* ALEXANDER. *Music plays. Trumpet flares again and* ALEXANDER *enters on horseback over top of hill, clad in full armor, with*

helmet and high white plumes. He rides down hill and stops before his tent. HEPHESTION *and another officer enter also on horseback on the knoll, where they dismount and their horses are led off by soldiers. More of the body companions, on foot, enter by way of hill and stand drawn up there, while others enter* R., *decorating stage. One or two high officers enter from* R., *and approach* ALEXANDER *who turns his horse towards them.* HEPHESTION *and the other officer after dismounting come down to* L., *of* ALEXANDER. *He addresses them still on horseback.*)

ALEXANDER. Peucestas, take your regiment at once into the city and relieve Erygius who guards the palace. There is to be no plunder and no destruction of property. (*Exit* PEUCESTAS L.) Leonnatus, send a messenger to Coenus who is in command at the Northern gates. His men are to remain outside the walls. (*Exit* LEONNATUS R.) Well, Menides, you come from Ptolemy?

MENIDES. The foragers report that the way to the East is barren and impassible.

ALEXANDER. 'Tis well. Return to Ptolemy. Let him camp and rest his men. (*Exit* MENIDES L. ALEXANDER—*To* EUMENES, *his secretary*) Eumenes, go into the tent and write out messages—one for Philotas, who commands our forces to the South, and one to Craterus, who is moving North against the Sogdians. Tell them the King of Bactra took his men from here ten days ago and started South to join the Mallians. Tell them that Bessus was here in Bactra less than one week ago. Let them seek for a trace of him. Have messengers in readiness. (*Exit* EUMENES *into tent* L. ALEXANDER *dismounts from his horse, which is led off*

by attendants. All the officers have withdrawn now, with the exception of HEPHESTION) Hephestion,—come look at me. Do I look happy now?

HEPHESTION. I think you do, and yet I marvel at it.

ALEXANDER. When we learned that Oxyartes had gone away ten days ago and taken with him all his men you thought that maiden had betrayed us. That is what you mean?

HEPHESTION. It was eleven days ago you met her on this spot and let her go back freely to the town. The following day the King and all his men fled hastily to the South. (*He ends with a shrug, as much as to say "the conclusion is obvious"*)

ALEXANDER. You know she gave her word to me that she would not tell she saw me here?

HEPHESTION. I wish you'd never met that maid.

ALEXANDER. Never met her! Would you rob me of the purest joy that I have ever known! I love her better now than when I left her here. I trusted her and I believed her word. Remember that, Hephestion——

HEPHESTION. How can you think she did not break her word?

ALEXANDER. Have we not proof that Bessus was here five days ago?

HEPHESTION. Well?

ALEXANDER. Well—what if I am sure that he was also here eleven days ago—the day we came?

HEPHESTION. Ah?

ALEXANDER. Think you, if a woman broke her word and caused the King to flee, that Bessus would have lingered here six days, without defence, expecting our attack!?

HEPHESTION. You are right! She did not tell!

ALEXANDER. I burn to know what she will say when she knows who I am. She thinks of Alexander as some hideous monster, who reeks with blood,

and crunches human bones to satisfy his appetite. (*He turns and calls to attendants*) Where's Brasidas? (*A soldier on guard of hut opens door and calls inside to* BRASIDAS)

SOLDIER. (*Calling*) Brasidas!—The King!

BRASIDAS. (*Inside hut*) I am here! I come!—(*He comes out of hut*)

ALEXANDER. Ho, Brasidas!—Approach! Well?

BRASIDAS. All has been done exactly as you commanded. The women have passed before me and I have judged them with a kindly eye.

ALEXANDER. You have kept apart the young and beautiful?

BRASIDAS. I've been most careful, I——

ALEXANDER. (*Interruting*) Enough! Is there not one more beautiful than all the rest?

BRASIDAS. Alexander, when you are as old as I you'll learn that such questions cannot be answered yes or no. The matter is delicate—there is the question of taste.

ALEXANDER. Enough! Let the women come out one by one and lead them this way beyond the hill.

BRASIDAS. Very good. (*He goes to hut and gives order in undertone to Guards before going in*)

ALEXANDER. Hephestion—this way—stand here before me. I must see and not be seen. (*He turns and calls a guard*) Perdiceas—come—stand here beside Hephestion. (PERDICEAS *stands above* HEPHESTION *facing hut. They are about* c., *a little up stage.* ALEXANDER *stands beside them, shielding himself so that he cannot be seen*) So!—Oh. Hephestion—my heart is thumping,—as it did when first I went to battle, and waited by my father's side to hear the trumpets sound, before we charged the enemy. (*The first girl appears in door of hut*) Hush—(ALEXANDER *leans forward with expectancy Then he shakes his head and whispers to* HEPHESTION) She is pretty, too. But oh, how different!

(*The first one is accompanied by one of the soldiers on guard at the hut. She passes up across back of stage and out of sight* L., *over knoll. The other five follow her out, and the other soldier brings up the rear.* ALEXANDER *shows growing impatience, as each one disappoints his expectation. After the last one,* BRASIDAS *appears and comes to* ALEXANDER) Is that all?

BRASIDAS. The one you seek is not among them?

ALEXANDER. Is there not another—more beautiful than these?

BRASIDAS. There is one other——

ALEXANDER. Ah!

BRASIDAS. She's different from the rest.

ALEXANDER. Hephestion! You hear! (*To* BRASIDAS) How is she different?

BRASIDAS. Well, she's not exactly what I'd call —another might think her so—and you yourself might possibly—that is, if you saw her at a distance, —you might think so too.

ALEXANDER. Think what?

BRASIDAS. Strictly speaking, I mean, she is not beautiful.

ALEXANDER. Not beautiful!

BRASIDAS. But she has a certain something about her—a certain sly way that makes her very pleasing.

ALEXANDER. Have a care, Brasidas!

BRASIDAS. I meant no offense to your taste, Alexander,—if she be the one you seek, I cannot blame you. The fact is, I meant to ask your permission to keep her for myself.

ALEXANDER. Let me see this maid—bid her come forth. (ALEXANDER *goes again behind* HEPHESTION *and* PERDICEAS. BRASIDAS *goes to door of hut, then stops and turns back a step*)

BRASIDAS. That reminds me—I told Evadne—her name is Evadne.

ALEXANDER. (*Sounding the name and thinking if it fits with his idea of* ROXANA) Evadne!?——

BRASIDAS. She begged me to take her before Alexander. There's something she would ask.

ALEXANDER. It is not she, Hephestion. My unknown maid would never ask to go before the monster—nor beg a favor of him.

BRASIDAS. She says she is the companion of King Oxyartes' daughter, the Princess Roxana.

ALEXANDER. (*With a start*) The Princess Roxana?

BRASIDAS. It is of her she would speak and also of an old man named Eurylocus.

ALEXANDER. (*With a shout*) Eurylocus! (*To* BRASIDAS) Let me see this Evadne! Bring her forth quickly. (BRASIDAS *goes into hut—To* HEPHESTION) Eurylocus!—That is the name she called when first she came upon us here, "Eurylocus"—you remember how she called, "Eurylocus!"

(BRASIDAS *brings* EVADNE *from hut. He goes to support her.*)

BRASIDAS. (*To* EVADNE) Lean on me.

EVADNE. My ankle is better now—thank you—I can go alone.

(*As she comes out,* ALEXANDER *stands shielded a little by* HEPHESTION, *so as not to be seen in case* EVADNE *should prove to be* ROXANA, *after all. But he is convinced of the contrary and as soon as he catches a glimpse of her he turns away* L., *thinking.*)

ALEXANDER. (*As he moves* L., *thinking*) Roxana? Eurylocus? Roxana?—(BRASIDAS *meanwhile brings* EVADNE *down* R. C. ALEXANDER *turns and goes toward her decidedly. To* EVADNE) I am

Alexander, the conqueror of Persia and your Emperor. Answer me what I ask truthfully—your life depends upon it—(EVADNE *looks on him in awe*) Your princess—Roxana—what is she like? Is she beautiful?

EVADNE. She is more than beautiful.

ALEXANDER. Can you remember if she ever came to wander in these woods?

EVADNE. She came here often——

ALEXANDER. Dressed in simple garb?

EVADNE. 'Twas so she came to gather herbs with old Eurylocus. This is his hut.

ALEXANDER. (*With elation*) Roxana! the daughter of a King!—(*Turning to* EVADNE) Where is she now? Speak? Where is Roxana?

EVADNE. She sent me this morning on some errands. I was much delayed. And then your soldiers came and seized me.

ALEXANDER. This morning, then, Roxana was in Bactra?

EVADNE. She may have gone with Eurylocus.

ALEXANDER. Gone where?

EVADNE. I cannot say. Into the woods somewhere—or to the mountains.

(LEONNATUS, *who went away earlier in the scene, has now returned with two other officers,*—CLEON *and* ARISTOMENES. *They stand near the tent, waiting to report to* ALEXANDER. *He now turns to them and gives orders like a whirlwind.*)

ALEXANDER. Hephestion—give orders to our cavalry—let them scour the woods and fields in all directions, North, South, East and West! Let them find Roxana! Go! (HEPHESTION *goes out* L.) Leonnatus, let the Thessalian foot be sent into the mountains—let them cover every foot of ground

where man can go, and bring Roxana to me—Go! (LEONNATUS *exits*) Cleon—go with all haste to Peucestas at the Palace. Let him search every room and passage, the temples and the vaults and find Roxana! Go! (*Exit* CLEON R.) Aristomenes, —let messengers be sent to all our generals who command at the gates of the city! Let proclamations be posted in every street that Roxana must be brought to us. The fate of the city depends upon it. Go! (*Exit* ARISTOMENES)

BRASIDAS. Alexander—what shall be done with Evadne?

ALEXANDER. Let her be near at hand. I will speak further with her.

(*While* ALEXANDER *is speaking,* CLITUS *enters* L., *looking dusty and travel-worn. He is followed by two or four soldiers who also look dusty. They remain* L., *while* CLITUS *advances to* ALEXANDER. *When* ALEXANDER *finishes speaking,* BRASIDAS *leads* EADNE *back to the hut and* CLITUS *addresses* ALEXANDER.)

CLITUS. Alexander——

ALEXANDER. Ah Clitus! You come from Craterus? What news?

CLITUS. You have won a great victory!

ALEXANDER. Ah!

CLITUS. We met the Sogdians four days ago. They made a fierce resistance but we defeated them. We hold their towns to the North and they accept you as their Emperor.

ALEXANDER. Come to my tent and tell me more. (*He stops at entrance of tent*) What of Bessus? Have you news of him?

CLITUS. No.

ALEXANDER. Ah. Then he, too, has gone South. Come. (*Exeunt* ALEXANDER *and* CLITUS *into tent* L.)

(*A* SOLDIER *enters* R., *calling* BRASIDAS.)

SOLDIER. (*Calling*) Brasidas! Brasidas!——

BRASIDAS. (*At door of hut*) Who calls? (DIPHILOS *follows him from hut*)

SOLDIER. Roxana is found!

BRASIDAS. Where is she?

SOLDIER. Two of Lagus's soldiers discovered her in the woods. They have brought her here. (*He points* R.)

BRASIDAS Ah!——

SOLDIER. (*Calling off* R.) This way—This way!——

BRASIDAS. (*To* DIPHILOS) Come forward, Diphilos. You shall see the paragon. (*A Persian Woman is led in* R., *by two Soldiers. A third soldier —the one who spoke to* BRASIDAS *before —also enters with her, walking before the soldiers on the down-stage side, so that the audience does not get sight of the woman till she reaches* R. C., *and the soldiers drop back. Then it is seen that she is rather an ordinary looking woman of about thirty, wearing coarse and soiled garments and rather slovenly in general appearance.* BRASIDAS *gives a start, and stares at her in comic amazement*)—Are you Roxana?

WOMAN. So I am called.

BRASIDAS. You are the daughter of Oxyartes, the King?

WOMAN. I am the daughter of Biliphenes, the sausage seller.

(BRASIDAS *glares at her a moment with comic scorn and offended dignity—as if he had been made the butt of some monstrous joke.* DIPHILOS *bursts out laughing.*)

BRASIDAS. (*With a savage roar*) Out of my sight, Idiots! Take her away! Take her to Biliphenes and tell him to watch her close or Brasidas may fall in love with her!——

DIPHILOS. (*Laughing*) Roxana!—Sausage-seller!——

BRASIDAS. I've lost my patience with these Persian hags! (*The* PRINCESS ROXANA *and two of her attendants, who are dressed like* EVADNE *are brought over the hill by an Officer and Soldiers*) They're only fit to harness to a cart and draw our burdens with! If I were King, I'd let them feel the lash awhile, Roxanas, or no Roxanas!—Here are some more—I'll waste no gentle words on them. (*To Officer*) What are these?

OFFICER. We found these three at prayer in the temple.

BRASIDAS. At prayer—were they? What are their names?

OFFICER. We could not make them speak.

BRASIDAS. Why didn't you beat them?

OFFICER. Peucestas ordered me to take them here to Alexander's tent. When they heard that, one of them, seized up a sword and attempted to end her life. To keep her safe I tied her hands. This is the one. (*Indicating* ROXANA)

BRASIDAS. (*To* ROXANA) Stand forward that I may look at you. (*She does not move*) You're obstinate—are you? (*He takes hold of her and pulls her rather roughly down* R. *of* C.) Stand forward, I say!—And so you tried to take your life, did you? Do you think Alexander can't take your life soon enough, if he has no better use to put you to?—Answer me—Sharp! I've not time to waste! Who are you?

OFFICER. She seems to be a person of some quality——

BRASIDAS. I want none of her quality—she's ob-

stinate as a mule. (*To* ROXANA)—Do you want to save yourself a beating?

ROXANA. I expect no mercy from savages.

BRASIDAS. Oh ho!

ROXANA. Whether your King wills it or not, you cannot make me live against my wish. I scorn his power and his cruelty. You may tell him so.

(HEPHESTION *enters* L., *as* ROXANA *is finishing. He stops short, utters an ejaculation and stands gazing at her a moment, as he recognizes her.*)

BRASIDAS. (*Swelling with rage and impatience*) By Jupiter! I will tell him! I'll make you tremble, too!

HEPHESTION. (*Coming forward and checking him*) Brasidas!

BRASIDAS. (*Turning*) What now?

HEPHESTION. (*With a gesture of command, beckoning* BRASIDAS *to him*) Brasidas! (BRASIDAS *goes to him.* HEPHESTION *seizes him by the arm and whispers to him quickly.* BRASIDAS *gives a smothered ejaculation of surprise, and glances towards* ROXANA. *In a low voice*) Out of sight behind the trees. Be quick. (HEPHESTION *throws a look at* ROXANA *and rushes into the tent*)

BRASIDAS. (*Turning back, with change of manner. To* ROXANA) I am Brasidas. Have no fear of me. I admire beauty such as yours. Come this way. We shall see what we shal see. (*Exeunt* R. BRASIDAS *with* ROXANA, *her two attendants and soldiers*)

(ALEXANDER *enters from tent, followed by* HEPHESTION, CLITUS, EUMENES.)

ALEXANDER. (*To* HEPHESTION, *who carries a silk scarf*) Keep it close about her eyes until I

give the sign. (*Exit* HEPHESTION R.) Let the guard be drawn up and bid the trumpets sound. (ALEXANDER *goes to throne*)

(*The Guards file in and are drawn up on either side of the throne, the attendants are drawn up, too, making* ALEXANDER *the centre-piece of a stunning tableau.* ROXANA *is led in* R., *by* HEPHESTION. *The scarf is about her head and covers her face completely. She is followed by the Soldiers who lead in her two attendants—remaining* R., *to compete the picture.* HEPHESTION *leads* ROXANA C., *facing the throne, and stands ready to remove the scarf. At a sign from* ALEXANDER *the trumpets flare out suddenly and exultingly. Then all is still, while* HEPHESTION *speaks.*)

HEPHESTION. O mighty Alexander—King of Macedonia—Captain-General of Greece, great Emperor of Persia and Conqueror of the universe—here is a maid who scorns your mercy and defies your cruelty. Will you be pleased to look at her and to command what punishment befits her case?

(*The trumpets flare out again.* HEPHESTION *removes scarf from* ROXANA'S *head and drops back.* ROXANA'S *head is bowed, her eyes are closed—she is nerving herself for the ordeal which confronts her. There is a moment or two of silence.* ALEXANDER *gazes at her expectantly and rapturously. She does not look.* ALEXANDER *rises slowly, gazing at her, then he speaks her name quietly and reassuringly.*)

ALEXANDER. Roxana—(*She starts with a thrill, as if the voice and the name went through her. She looks up, sees the soldiers and her eyes follow them*

to the throne in a sort of dazed way. She sees ALEXANDER *and stares at him blankly in stunned amazement.* ALEXANDER *comes down the steps, meeting her gaze. Gently*) I am Alexander—(*Business for* ROXANA) Have no fear, Roxana. I've come again, you see. I kept my word and you kept yours. (*She makes a movement—He sees her hands are tied and goes to untie them*) You kept your word—I know you did. And you shall see I'll prove my gratitude. (*He unties her hands*)

ROXANA. If you are less a monster than I thought you were—if you have any kindness in your heart—don't look at me—don't speak to me. Bind my hands again and send me off among your captive slaves.

ALEXANDER. I mean to make you happy, if I can.

ROXANA. Make me happy? You? I am no plaything and I'd rather die than bow my head beneath your yoke.

ALEXANDER. There is no need to bow your head—and why should you think of dying? The sun still shines as brightly as it did—the trees and fields are just as green—the world is young and full of life and hope. Are you not also young—and beautiful? Why should you think of death? Your father is a king. His royal blood flows in your veins and you were destined to become a queen.

ROXANA. No matter what you say or do, you cannot blind me to the truth. You are Alexander.

ALEXANDER. My name is Alexander—yes—I'm not ashamed of it.

ROXANA. My father has an army and he will fight you to the death.

ALEXANDER. If I must go to battle with your father, there is no help for it. (ROXANA *goes to speak. Checking her*) You need not answer now, for I will come and speak to you again—What ho!

—my guards! A chariot for the Princess Roxana, and my escort. (*Exeunt some guards and attendants, as enter* LEONNATUS)

LEONNATUS. Alexander——

ALEXANDER. Well?

LEONNATUS. Ptolemy has seized upon a band of warlike Persians. They laid down their arms without a blow and said they came to fight for Alexander not against him. Their chiefs demand to be brought before you.

ALEXANDER. Send them here.—I will speak to them. (LEONNATUS *goes to* L.)

(EVADNE *is led down* R., *by* BRASIDAS. *She sees* ROXANA *suddenly.*)

EVADNE. Roxana!

ROXANA. Evadne! (*They embrace*)

(BESSUS *and* SPITAMENES *are led in by Guards. The Guards remain* L. BESSUS *and* SPITAMENES *bow low to* ALEXANDER. *As they come forward,* ROXANA *recognizes them. She gives a stifled cry.* ALEXANDER *turns to her quickly—looks at her questioningly—then looks back at* BESSUS *and* SPITAMENES.)

ALEXANDER. Roxana—do you know these men?

ROXANA. (*Trembling and hesitating*) I——

(EVADNE *has business touching* ROXANA'S *arm.*)

BESSUS. (*Interrupting*) I am Tigranes and this is my cousin Bacurius.

ALEXANDER. (*To* ROXANA) Why did you start?

ROXANA. I—I—These men,—came in—I thought I—that they were friends of my father's——

BESSUS. The Princess Roxana hesitates to tell you, O Alexander, that we came here some months ago in answer to a summons from the King of

Bactra. We then agreed to join our force with his if danger threatened us. But now we have learned that no one can resist you,—you are the King of kings, and we have come to offer you our true allegiance.

ALEXANDER. Roxana, speak. You know these men. If what they say displeases you, say but the word and punish them with death.

ROXANA. (*Breathlessly*) No—No—I do not wish it.

ALEXANDER. All Persians are my subjects now and those who come to me of their own free will deserve a generous welcome. Tigranes and Bacurius I thank you for your pledge of faith and I accept your services. (*To* HEPHESTION *and guards*) Return their arms to them and let them be received among my men, and treated like companions.

(BESSUS *and* SPITAMENES *bow low. As they are about to be led off, the chariot approaches, and* BESSUS *and* SPITAMENES *stand to one side* L., *and remain on stage for final picture.*)

ROXANA. (*To* ALEXANDER) This is Evadne—my attendant and my friend.—May I have her near me?

ALEXANDER. No one will take her from you.—You may have anything you wish that lies within our power. Say but a word at any time and it will be obeyed as if it were a royal command. While you honor us by being here, you shall receive no less of homage and respect than if you were our Queen. And now, to the palace!

(*The Chariot drives in.* ALEXANDER *helps* ROXANA *to get in.* EVADNE *gets in, with her.* ALEXANDER *mounts his horse, while the trumpets*

sound and the Guards march on before the chariot. The Chariot moves out and ALEXANDER *starts to ride out after it,* BESSUS *glaring after him threateningly, as:*

Curtain.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE I

SCENE: *A terrace overlooking the city. The Palace runs down* L., *to up* L., *with an entrance* L. 2 E. *to* ROXANA'S *apartments. A flight of steps leads down from terrace* R. 1 E., *to grounds below—another flight of steps up* L. C., *leading off from terrace to grounds. The entrance to a secret subterranean passage-way is down* L. *partially shielded from view.*

TIME: *Moonlight.*

DISCOVERED: POLYMON *sits alone in the moonlight gazing at the ground, he raises his head, looks at palace entrance* L., *expectantly. No one comes, he rises with a sigh—paces about a moment, restlessly,—then sits again—rests his chin in his hands and stares before him.* BRASIDAS *enters* R. POLYMON *does not rouse from his reverie and* BRASIDAS *stands a moment looking him over curiously.*

BRASIDAS. Polymon—(POLYMON *starts*) How long have you been sitting there like a sick chicken?

POLYMON. I sit as I please.

BRASIDAS. Your watch was finished an hour ago and I relieved you. I, Brasidas, am on guard—so, strictly speaking, you must sit as *I* please.

POLYMON. You talk wearies me. Your post is at the gate below.

BRASIDAS. (*Offended—eyeing* POLYMON *and grunting*) H'm—My duty is to see that no one

approaches Roxana to annoy her. Your presence here is enough to annoy any one.

POLYMON. Why do you stay here, then?

BRASIDAS. Not to delight my eye with the sight of you.

POLYMON. Well?

BRASIDAS. If you still think you have any claim on Evadne—you are an ass.

POLYMON. I will not discuss with you.

BRASIDAS. I'll tell you this—when we turn back toward Macedonia you'll see that Evadne goes with me.

POLYMON. If she thinks of you at all, 'tis as a grandfather.

BRASIDAS. (*Stung*) Ha! If I were to tell you how it is between us—You thought no doubt because you're young you'd win her. Ha! Ha!

POLYMON. You make yourself ridiculous.

BRASIDAS. (*Getting angry, then checking himself*) I?—No—I see you're hopelessly in love. I can't blame you—she's a subtle, sly, appetizing creature. If I were to tell you—But no!—Gaze at the moon, if you like.

POLYMON. You're in your dotage.

BRASIDAS. Ha! ha! I pity you! Mope away! Mope away! I'll not disturb you. Ha! ha! (BRASIDAS *goes out* R. POLYMON *looks after him a moment. Then he turns and looks at palace* L., *as if questioning to himself what* BRASIDAS *has said. Then he turns and paces up-stage impatiently*)

(EVADNE *enters* L. *She sees* POLYMON, *smiles to herself, slyly, and looks away from him.* POLYMON *sees her and comes down.*)

POLYMON. Evadne!——

EVADNE. (*Coyly*) Ah? Polymon?

POLYMON. I wish to talk with you.

EVADNE. Roxana is coming out. You must not stay.

POLYMON. Would you be rid of me?

EVADNE. Polymon!

POLYMON. You are not playing me false?

EVADNE. Polymon!

POLYMON. What have you said to Brasidas?

EVADNE. I?

POLYMON. He spoke of you just now, as if you were all his. (*She makes a gesture of amusement*) If I thought——

EVADNE. Polymon!——

POLYMON. It makes me mad to hear the dotard boast!

EVADNE. Poor old Brasidas!—he's so old, so hideous, and soaked with sour wine.

POLYMON. Bah!

EVADNE. Besides, he's good to me.—He does whatever I ask him to.

POLMON. Am I not good to you? I wait on you as if I were your slave. I carry messages.—I let you leave the palace as often as you will—see whom you like and have your way in everything.

EVADNE. Am I ungrateful?

POLYMON. You must not play me false!

EVADNE. Polymon!

POLYMON. When you leave Bactra, you'll go with me?—No matter what Roxana says?

EVADNE. Roxana is good. Be kind to her and try to win her favor too. When the time comes, she will not refuse to let me go with you.

POLYMON. You're a sorceress!

EVADNE. Then may I ask a favor of you?

POLYMON. Anything.

EVADNE. Take this trinket (*Giving him bracelet*) to the tent of Chiron—at the Northern gate. He has—a Persian woman—Xantippa is her name—

take this to her. Tell her Evadne sends it with her greetings.

POLYMON. Xantippa?

EVADNE. You'll go at once? (*He looks at her hesitating*)—To-morrow when it is your turn to guard, I'll steal out from the palace and come down to you. Go quickly. Go! (*He seizes her hand and kisses it, then hurries off* R.)

(ROXANA *enters from Palace* L.)

ROXANA. Now tell me what this means?

EVADNE. (*Mysteriously*) Bessus will be here to-night.

ROXANA. Bessus! You have seen him then?

EVADNE. I saw Spitamenes.

ROXANA. Well? Did he tell you why they came to Alexander as impostors?

EVADNE. It was the only chance they had to save themselves. The Sogdians had surrendered and Alexander held all roads between them and the Mallians. Where could they go? 'Twas then they hit upon this plan which you saw carried out.

ROXANA. What good is life if it must wear a traitor's smile and be contemptible?

EVADNE. Bessus is our King—'Tis not for us to judge him.

ROXANA. I do not judge him—but I hate the thought of what he's done.

EVADNE. You do not yet know all.

ROXANA. I know enough—too much.

EVADNE. Suppose they have a plan to get away from here and join the Mallians—suppose they can accomplish our escape and carry us with them safely to your father?—Suppose by being here they find a way to set all Persia free?

ROXANA. No act of theirs will do it!

EVADNE. Alexander is no god. His life is mortal. Suppose it should end suddenly?

ROXANA. Stop! If Bessus has some coward's plan—I would not hear of it!

EVADNE. Roxana—what's come over you? What would your father say if he could hear you?

ROXANA. My father has not seen what I have seen.

EVADNE. Have you forgotten what this Alexander is?

ROXANA. You mean he is our enemy?

EVADNE. If he lives but another week, he might defeat your father and the Mallians—have you thought of that?

ROXANA. And if he does, he'll treat them all as friends.

EVADNE. Bah! I've heard these Macedonians talk and I know what they mean.—If Alexander lives and triumphs, we'll all be common slaves and you and I will be no different from the rest.

ROXANA. Evadne!

EVADNE. Alexander may treat you well awhile, because your beauty pleases him. Then he'll cast you off and you will fall as booty to some drunken Macedonian.

ROXANA. Alexander is a brave and lofty man—He's treated us and all our people here with greater kindness and respect than any Persian King has ever shown an enemy.

EVADNE. 'Tis you who are a traitress, then!

ROXANA. I am no traitress. I'm Oxyartes' daughter and I've not forgotten it.

EVADNE. Then will you do as Bessus wills?

ROXANA. There is no Bessus here. As for that cringing Persian who came to fawn and beg for favors from our enemy—he calls himself Tigranes—I do not know him and I do not wish to know what thoughts are in his mind.

EVADNE. He may be here at any moment, with Spitamenes.

ROXANA. Then, if you have an interest in their lives, they'd best not stay. Alexander will be here.

(*Exit* ROXANA L., *into Palace.* EVADNE *looks after her a moment, nonplussed, then she shows by a movement of defiance that she means to carry out her determination, in spite of* ROXANA. *She goes to a concealed door* L., *and listens expectantly, but hears nothing. She comes away quickly and assumes an air of unconcern, as* BRASIDAS *enters* R.)

BRASIDAS. Ah—my little cuckatoo—if you are alone why didn't you come to Brasidas?

EVADNE. My dear, good Brasidas—you know there's nowhere I would rather be than by your side when you enchant me with some tale of thrilling valor that you've done.

BRASIDAS. Do I enchant you?

EVADNE. You know you do! But you must not stay now. I'll come to you later at the gate.

BRASIDAS. There's a woman outside. She wishes to speak with you.

EVADNE. A woman?

BRASIDAS. She calls herself Xantippa.

EVADNE. (*Dissimulating*) Oh—yes—poor woman, her husband beats her.

BRASIDAS. Some women deserve it!

EVADNE. Roxana wishes to speak to her. Let her come up.

BRASIDAS. You won't forget your Brasidas? He's lonely to-night.

EVADNE. Have no fear. I'll come.

(BRASIDAS *starts to go* R., *then turns decidedly.*)

BRASIDAS. See here,—there's one thing that's got to be settled. What have you said to Polymon?

EVADNE. Polymon?

BRASIDAS. I won't have any nonsense. If I thought——!

EVADNE. You're not jealous of Polymon. You—Brasidas!

BRASIDAS. No—He's an ass! But still it makes my blood boil.

EVADNE. He has no thought of me.

BRASIDAS. He has! The fool's in love—I know a sick chicken when I see one!

EVADNE. I'll tell you something, but you must not tell—You promise?

BRASIDAS. Well?

EVADNE. Polymon's in love—but not with me—He speaks of me, no doubt—because he fears that some one might suspect the truth. He loves Roxana!

BRASIDAS. Ah? The ass! You're sure of that?

EVADNE. I've seen them together.

BRASIDAS. I see—oh—ho—Now I'm an ass! I might have guessed it too!

EVADNE. You see how I have trusted you——

BRASIDAS. (*Chuckling*) Polymon!——

EVADNE. Hush! You promised not to tell.

BRASIDAS. He fooled me, yes, he fooled me!

EVADNE. Hush! (*She waves him to go*) Let Xantippa come.

BRASIDAS. (*Going* R.) I'll keep his secret—but I am an ass! (*Exit* R.)

(EVADNE *goes to secret door again and listens. Then she goes up and looks off in both directions. As she comes down* XANTIPPA *enters* R. XANTIPPA *is fairly good looking, but not too young.*)

EVADNE. Well, Xantippa—is it yes or no?

XANTIPPA. I will tell you——

EVADNE. Have you the names?

XANTIPPA. There are six of them. They hate Alexander for something that he did to one of them and they have taken oath to murder him.

EVADNE. Are you sure that Iolas, the cup-bearer, is one?

XANTIPPA. His turn is first and he must make the first attempt on Alexander's life. That was decided when they drew lots.

EVADNE. You spoke to Iolas?

XANTIPPA. Yes. And he agreed to go with me to-morrow night to the spot you named and get the poison from you.

EVADNE. I'll be there, unless a great event occurs to-night which may change all our plans.

XANTIPPA. A great event? How will we know?

EVADNE. You will know and so will he, and all the world—if what I mean occurs.—Wait. (*She goes to secret door—listens, then opens it*)

(*Enter* EURYLOCUS, BESSUS *and* SPITAMENES. BESSUS *stops* L. C., *on seeing* XANTIPPA *and turns to* EVADNE.)

BESSUS. Is this the woman?

EVADNE. Xantippa—yes.

BESSUS. Send her away. We do not need her now. (BESSUS *turns up with* SPITAMENES *and looks about.* EURYLOCUS *remains* L.)

EVADNE. (*To* XANTIPPA) You may go now. (XANTIPPA *starts to go* R.) Not that way—Brasidas must not know yet you've gone. This way—Eurylocus will guide you. (*She whispers to* EURYLOCUS. *He nods*)

(*He goes out through secret passage followed by* XANTIPPA. BESSUS, *leaving* SPITAMENES *up stage to keep watch, comes down to* EVADNE.)

BESSUS. Where is Roxana? (EVADNE *motions to* L.) Alone? (EVADNE *nods*) Go quickly then and bid her come to me. (EVADNE *hesitates*) Well?

EVADNE. She will not see you. She refused to hear a word of what you'd planned.

BESSUS. What!

EVADNE. This Alexander has bewitched her! She speaks of him as if he were some god, and when I vaguely hinted at his fate, she flew at me so fiercely that I dared not speak another word.

BESSUS. By Pluto, then, she shall atone for this! (*He paces about in rage, thinking a moment*) 'Twill make our plan more difficult, but still it can be done. She'll go with us or I will strangle her!—Can we be sure that Alexander will come here to-night?

EVADNE. He will come.

BESSUS. Well then to-night must settle all.—Three men are waiting near at hand. They know what they're to do!—Eurylocus will guide them through the secret way. The rest is in your hands.

EVADNE. I will not fail.

BESSUS. When the work is done, I and Spitamenes will be near. Take Roxana to her farthest room and——

SPITAMENES. (*Interrupting*) Some one comes!

BESSUS. Ah!

EVADNE. (*Looking* R.) It's Alexander!

BESSUS. (*Going* L.) Come with us out of sight and I will tell you what you have to do.

(*Exeunt* BESSUS, SPITAMENES *and* EVADNE *through secret passage. Soft music—flutes and lyres, or harps—begins to play off* R. *It is supposed to be a sort of serenade arranged by* ALEXANDER.)

ALEXANDER. (*Off* R.) Let no one enter. I would hear no sound except the music.

(*Enter* ALEXANDER R. *He is clad in a court costume of gorgeous effect, with a flowing robe of purple red, which is so arranged that it may be easily cast aside. He wears a jewelled belt, with a short sword in a jewelled scabbard and on his head is the soft tiara (in some modified form) which could only be worn by the Emperor of Persia. He comes on a few steps slowly, then pauses and glances about. He gazes at* ROXANA'S *apartments, a moment;—then his ear is caught by the strains of music and he listens to it with visible pleasure. He sighs—then turns slowly and takes in the beauty of the scene—the landscape and the heavens, the moon and the stars. He walks up a few steps, gazing about, then he turns. Enter* ROXANA L.)

Roxana——

ROXANA. Music!——(*She moves* R., *toward music*)

ALEXANDER. Those are Illyrian players who but lately came from our Macedonian court. My mother sent them to me.

ROXANA. From Macedonia?

ALEXANDER. Yes. Does their music please you?

ROXANA. I always liked to hear a flute,—and the lyres' notes mingle with it sweetly.

ALEXANDER. Then these Illyrians are yours.

ROXANA. I—I would not take them from you——

ALEXANDER. It would please me if I thought these men could make an hour of your life less irksome to you. They are yours.

ROXANA. I thank you, then.

ALEXANDER. Roxana, there are many things that I would like to tell you. I've held them back till now because I feared to do myself and you a wrong.

I wanted you to know me better first—I wanted you to learn that even if you must regard me as an enemy I am not quite so black or base as some would make me out. Now if I ask you something will you answer it quite simply and without a fear.

ROXANA. I may not forget you are my father's enemy and I am still your captive here.

ALEXANDER. Must that make you unjust to me? Did I refuse to recognize your beauty and your courage because you were a Persian—or because you openly declared your hatred for the Macedonian King?

ROXANA. I do not think I am unjust. I had been misinformed concerning you.

ALEXANDER. Then you don't hate me, now, as fiercely as you did?

ROXANA. I had been misinformed.

ALEXANDER. Then tell me this—do I displease you when I come to see you here?

ROXANA. You have treated me with kindness and respect. I thank you for it.

ALEXANDER. But still I do displease you——?

ROXANA. Must I speak the truth?

ALEXANDER. I wish to know.

ROXANA. It troubles me to have you come. I do not wish it—no—I do not wish it!

ALEXANDER. You fear me?

ROXANA. If it is only out of kindness that you come—or if it is because you pity me—or because you wish to prove to me and to my people how greatly we misjudged you—there is no need of that—you've done enough.

ALEXANDER. And if it's something else that brings me to you?

ROXANA. Then you do wrong to come. For your own sake, as well as mine, I beg you, leave me here and never give one look or thought to me again.

ALEXANDER. Not think of you again! and never have you near to gaze upon! I could not, if I wanted to!——

ROXANA. No good can ever come of it—and if you have a hope to win my love and then to take me willingly——

ALEXANDER. And if I have that hope?

ROXANA. It means my death—and nothing more. I owe it to us both that you should understand. No matter what you say or do—whether it be kindness or threats or promises—I may remain your captive, but I will never be your willing slave.

ALEXANDER. And could you not consent to be my wife?

ROXANA. Your wife!—I?——

ALEXANDER. Do you suppose if I had thought of you as less than that I would remain a week in Bactra here and still stay on, while Bessus lives to boast himself a King and while my enemies are gathering strength *each day*? Would I do this, to trifle with a slave?

ROXANA. It cannot be!——

ALEXANDER. You've seen me many times—I've told you more about my inmost self—than I have ever told to anyone.—I've tried to let you see me as I am—not as a king or conqueror—not as an enemy,—but simply as a man—Is this the way that I would treat a slave?

ROXANA. It seems incredible that you are you. But whether you speak true or false, I'll answer truthfully. I think you are a good—a splendid man—a greater king and conqueror than ever lived before. But if you mean what you have said, concerning me, I am not worth so much.

ALEXANDER. The gods intended you to be my mate. They reared you in this distant land for me and it was they who sent me here to find you. And when we met as strangers in the woods, the gods

were present at our meeting and so it was that when you first appeared I felt instinctively that she had come—the one that I was searching for—the only one that I would ever call my wife!

ROXANA. The gods have willed it otherwise. If I were free to choose, I would not be—I could not be—the wife of Alexander.

ALEXANDER. Roxana——?

ROXANA. If I must wed, the gods have bound me to another.

ALEXANDER. No!——

ROXANA. He has my father's word and I have taken oath, before the gods, to wed no other.

ALEXANDER. His name!

ROXANA. Bessus.

ALEXANDER. Bessus! Bessus! Oh ye gods! Bessus! You, Roxana! marry Bessus! No! That will never be! You hear—despite your father's word—despite your oath—despite the gods themselves! Bessus is mine and I will kill him as I kill a toad!

ROXANA. So be it, then.

ALEXANDER. You know what he has done and you would wed him? He is a murderer! a regicide!

ROXANA. Bessus!

ALEXANDER. He plunged a dagger in Darius' back and flung him by the roadside, as a gift to me. Darius had not ceased to breathe when I came up. These arms held him when he died.

ROXANA. (*Sinking down*) Oh!

ALEXANDER. Darius was your King and as a King I honored him. Bessus is a sneaking regicide and I have vowed to punish him. If you will tell me where he's gone to hide—I'll start to-night and never pause until I'm face to face with him! Tell me where he is!

ROXANA. (*Forcing herself—slowly*) I cannot tell you where he is.

ALEXANDER. If you love Bessus,—No!! I'll kill him first—and then——

ROXANA. I don't love Bessus and I never did.

(ALEXANDER *starts and looks at her.*)

ALEXANDER. Roxana?

(EVADNE *admits conspirators through secret door. She exits* L.)

ROXANA. I did not know he killed Darius—I cannot believe 'twas Bessus.

ALEXANDER. It was.

ROXANA. (*Shaking her head—reasoning with herself*) But even if he did it, he is now our King. It's not for me to judge his acts.

ALEXANDER. If you did not love him, how came you, then, to bind yourself by oaths to marry him?

ROXANA. I did not wish to marry him or any one. I——

(ROXANA *screams as she sees the Assassins coming upon* ALEXANDER *from behind. He turns and sees them in time to draw his sword and defend himself.* ROXANA *continues to scream, moving about in terror—calling "Help"! off* R., *and up-stage.* ALEXANDER *kills one man and mortally wounds another, the third man drops his sword and runs out* R., *as* BRASIDAS *enters* R. *Guards and Attendants come on from up* L. C., *and down* R.)

BRASIDAS. (*Running on with sword drawn*) Are you in danger, Alexander? What has happened?

ALEXANDER. These men came at me from behind—(BESSUS *enters* R.) They're poor camp-fol-

lowers—they had no thought of what they did but only of their hire. See if they live—we must find out who sent them here.

(*Two Guards enter* R., *dragging on the third assassin. The musicians crowd on after them.* BRASIDAS *looks at first man.*)

BRASIDAS. Dead! (*He looks at other*) Dead!

ALEXANDER. (*Turning* R., *and seeing the third man*) Here is the other and he lives! We'll have the truth from him. (BESSUS *draws his sword and plunges it into the man as he stands between the guards. He falls dead in his tracks*) Tigranes! What does this mean?

BESSUS. (*Prostrating himself before* ALEXANDER *and offering his sword to* ALEXANDER) Forgive me, if I have displeased you. You are our King of kings—Our Persian gods would punish me if I could wait to see him live one moment more!

(ALEXANDER *looks at him a second in hesitation.*)

ALEXANDER. Put up your sword. (*He turns to* BRASIDAS *as* ROXANA *comes down and looks with horror at* BESSUS) Brasidas—how did these men come here upon the terrace?

BRASIDAS. No one passed the gate. I'll swear to that.

ALEXANDER. How did they get here, then?

BRASIDAS. They must have been in hiding here.

ALEXANDER. Where?

BRASIDAS. The only access to this terrace is from the apartment of Roxana.

ALEXANDER. Roxana!

(*All turn and look at* ROXANA.)

ROXANA. I am a Persian, sire, and the daughter

of a king who leads you enemies, but I am not an assassin.

ALEXANDER. (*Referring to* BRASIDAS) The man is old and he is seeking to excuse himself. It was your cry that saved me. To you I owe my life.

Picture and Curtain.

END OF ACT II. SCENE I.

SCENE II.

SCENE: *A shallow set representing an isolated spot in the woods. To* R., *among the foliage, is the front of a small hut. While this scene is being played a change of set can be effected behind the drop, and* ALEXANDER *is given time to make a change of costume—so that the entire second act may be played continuously—without intermission.*

TIME: *Night.*

DISCOVERED: XANTIPPA *and* IOLAS, *the cup-bearer.* IOLAS *wears a long cloak with which to conceal his face and form, if necessary.* XANTIPPA *looks off* L., *expectantly, awaiting* EVADNE.

XANTIPPA. (*Seeing some one approaching*) Sh! (*She turns to* IOLAS *with a warning gesture. Then she peers off* L., *again, then goes quickly to* IOLAS) It is Evadne, but she is not alone. The Macedonian guard is with her.

IOLAS. Brasidas!

XANTIPPA. Keep out of sight!

(IOLAS *goes out of sight; as* EVADNE *enters followed*

by BRASIDAS. EVADNE *catches sight of* XANTIPPA *and motions* BRASIDAS *back.*)

EVADNE. (*To* BRASIDAS) Wait!—(*She advances and motions* XANTIPPA *to withdraw quickly.* XANTIPPA *goes out of sight.* EVADNE *looks about, satisfied*) This is the place.

BRASIDAS. (*Coming* R. C.) Hum! So this is where your aged prophet dwells! Hum! I will not rail at him. Each man is wise after his own fashion. I once saw a Greek philosopher who chose to live in a tub with the sun's rays beating down on him. Diogenes, he called himself. When we were in Athens, he refused to come to the palace and pay his respects to us,—so Alexander and I were not ashamed to walk forth and pay our respects to his tub. He was a man of some wit and learning too. It is only an ass who thinks himself superior to wisdom. Call forth your wise man and I will converse with him honorably.

EVADNE. You must leave me here, awhile.

BRASIDAS. Leave you here? Not I.

EVADNE. Good Brasidas—I must see this man alone! If he saw you, he would never tell me what I wish to know.

BRASIDAS. Hum——

EVADNE. Besides if you would please me—there is something you could do?

BRASIDAS. Some drunken villain might run off with you.

EVADNE. I'll wait here—when I've finished with the soothsayer—and you shall take me back again.

BRASIDAS. Where would you have me go?

EVADNE. (*Thinking up an excuse to get rid of him*) It is not far—only go to the Northern gate——

BRASIDAS. What would you have me do at the Northern gate?

EVADNE. That's true. I did not tell you. Why —go to the tent of Chiron—he has a Persian woman —tell her Evadne sends greetings and ask her how her father does.

BRASIDAS. Hum!

EVADNE. Good Brasidas—don't scowl—do that for your Evadne and she will thank you for it.

BRASIDAS. (*Sourly*) Hum! Ask a Persian woman how her father does!

EVADNE. Brasidas!——

BRASIDAS. I go! (*Exit* BRASIDAS L.)

(XANTIPPA *comes from her concealment.*)

EVADNE. Where is Iolas?

XANTIPPA *motions as* IOLAS *steps out.*)

IOLAS. I am here.

EVADNE. (*With satisfaction*) Ah!

IOLAS. Why did Brasidas come with you?

EVADNE. I had to humor him.

XANTIPPA. He did not see us?

EVADNE. No.

IOLAS. Let's waste no words. You know why I am here and what my purpose is?

EVADNE. I do and if you succeed you will receive a greater reward than you ever dreamed of.

IOLAS. I am not here to bargain for reward! My friends and I have pledged ourselves to do a work of justice—A tyrant's life must pay the penalty.

EVADNE. You look determined and I hope you are.

IOLAS. You brought the poison?

EVADNE. I can get it for you if you'll tell me when you mean to use it.

IOLAS. To-morrow Alexander gives a banquet to celebrate the battle of Issus. It is my turn to be on duty, then.

EVADNE. To-morrow, then, you pour his wine and taste his cup for him?

IOLAS. (*Assenting*) My turn will not come again for many days.

EVADNE. Here is the poison, then. (*She takes a small phial and hands it to* IOLAS)

IOLAS. (*Taking it*) Ah!——

EVADNE. You see, it has no color and no smell—nor has it any taste.

IOLAS. Is it sure to kill?

EVADNE. A few drops in a cup of wine are quite enough. The effects are slow and strange but the end is certain.

XANTIPPA. But Iolas must taste the wine—what of him?

IOLAS. (*To* EVADNE) If I use this, then I die, too?

XANTIPPA. (*To* EVADNE) You spoke of something else.

EVADNE. (*Taking out another phial*) Here it is—the antidote. It's black you see and has a sickish smell—and it tastes bitter in the mouth. But it is harmless and can make the poison harmless, too.

IOLAS. When must I take it?

EVADNE. After you have tasted the other—within three hours' time.

IOLAS. Whence comes this poison? And this black stuff, which you say is harmless?

EVADNE. It is a secret which belongs to Bactra. Those crystal drops are worthy of your purpose for they have killed a king before—and that black stuff will save your life as once it saved another king.

IOLAS. Why should I trust you?

EVADNE. A common cause unites us, Iolas. I have friends who hate the Macedonian tyrant more than you, and if you rid the world of him, you'll win our everlasting gratitude.

IOLAS. Enough. I thank you. Fare you well. (*Exit* IOLAS, R.)

XANTIPPA. I'll pray the gods for Persia's sake that Iolas may not fail.

EVADNE. Fare well.

XANTIPPA. Fare well. (*Exit* XANTIPPA L. EVADNE *looks after her*)

(SPITAMENES *enters* R., *cautiously—sees that* EVADNE *is alone and comes* R. C.)

SPITAMENES. (*Whispering*) Evadne!

EVADNE. (*Turning with a start*) Spitamenes! (*She goes into his arms*)

SPITAMENES. Evadne!

EVADNE. Iolas has the poison, and to-morrow he will use it.

SPITAMENES. (*Whispering*) Evadne!

EVADNE. Spitamenes!

SPITAMENES. If all goes well and we are safe once more beside *our* King—I'll pay you back tenfold.

EVADNE. Hark! did you hear nothing?

SPITAMENES. No.

EVADNE. We must not stay here! Brasidas is coming back

SPITAMENES. (*Going* R.) Then this way. I must tell Bessus what you have done.

EVADNE. (*Listening* L.) Quickly, then. (*Exeunt* SPITAMENES *and* EVADNE R.)

(*A moment later* BRASIDAS *enters* L. *He looks about, then calls.*)

BRASIDAS. Evadne! Evadne! (*He listens. No answer*) Hum! (*He goes to door of hut and knocks—waits for an answer*) Hum! (*He knocks again very loud. No answer*) Evadne! (*He opens the door and looks in*)

(AMYNTAS *enters* L., *and crosses* R., *as* BRASIDAS *comes down.*)

I am an ass! (AMYNTAS *turns*) Who's that?—Amyntas!

AMYNTAS. Ah—'tis Brasidas!

BRASIDAS. I am an ass!

AMYNTAS. What's wrong with you?

BRASIDAS. I'll tell you what is wrong. I have suspicions!

AMYNTAS. Suspicions—of what?

BRASIDAS. You are an honest man and can be trusted. Listen then. You know Roxana and you know how Alexander is smitten with her beauty. He is young—that's no affair of mine. I know she is in love with some one else—I know his name, but that is no affair of mine.—Last night Alexander was attacked while he was on the terrace which adjoins Roxana's apartments. You know that?

AMYNTAS. Yes.

BRASIDAS. I was on guard so I know whereof I speak. Those assassins must have been concealed in Roxana's rooms!

AMYNTAS. You mean?

BRASIDAS. When I hinted at it, Alexander called me galling names—he said I was old, and other things—because he is in love.

AMYNTAS. Ah?

BRASIDAS. That is not all. To-day I made a search of Roxana's rooms and I found something which confirmed my suspicions.

AMYNTAS. What was that?

BRASIDAS. A lot of herbs and poisonous concoctions. Then I remembered that an old herb dealer named Eurylocus had been much with her of late. To-night Evadne, who is Roxana's attendant,—I do not altogether blame her—she only does, no doubt, as she is ordered—Well Evadne said she must see

an aged prophet and I came with her here. I asked her if it was Eurylocus—she told me no—that he was sick, to-day. She sent me off and now she's gone and I'm an ass to let her slip away!

AMYNTAS. What is it that you think?

BRASIDAS. The assassins failed to kill Alexander—old Brasidas was there and came to his assistance—and so Roxana is obliged to try some other way.

AMYNTAS. You think she means to poison him.

BRASIDAS. And he will let he do it, too, if some one does not stop him—because he's young and he's in love!

AMYNTAS. Alexander must be warned at once. Tell him what you know.

BRASIDAS. It would not do to have it come from me. He'd fly into a rage—because I'm old. I dare not speak again to him. If you go to him, that is different. He'll listen to you and a warning now may save his life.

AMYNTAS. Alexander has commanded me to start at once to join Philotas. I'm on my way to the Northern gates.

BRASIDAS. Hum!——

AMYNTAS. (*Thinking*) So be it, then!

BRASIDAS. You'll speak to him?

AMYNTAS. Have no fear. Alexander shall be warned!

END OF ACT II. SCENE II.

SCENE III.

SCENE: *A Banquet Hall in the Palace. The color scheme and general effect very rich and Orien-*

tal. Couches are placed along a crescent-shaped table for the guests to recline on.

TIME: *Evening.*

DISCOVERED: *The High Officers—Courtiers, Philosophers, etc., recline on couches above the table. Attendants, Cup-Bearers, etc., stand above them and move about—Guards distributed here and there. The banquet itself is over and the guests are flushed with wine and food.* BRASIDAS *and* AMYNTAS *are absent from the gathering but all the other Macedonians seen in preceding acts may be present.* ALEXANDER *is seated at the Center of the table—his couch being somewhat higher than the others.* IOLAS, *the cup-bearer, stands behind* ALEXANDER, *carrying the pitcher of wine and also the cup from which* ALEXANDER *drinks. Each time that* ALEXANDER *is about to drink,* IOLAS *first raises the cup to his own lips and drinks before handing cup to* ALEXANDER. *The other cup-bearers do likewise each time that they fill the wine-cups, from the pitchers which they carry. As the banquet is supposed to have been in progress for some hours, when the curtain rises,* ALEXANDER *is already feeling the effects of the poison. He is feverish and despondent and seems absorbed in his own thoughts and quite out of tune with the scene of festivity about him. Before the curtain rises the music of flutes and harps is heard and when the curtain rises several Persian dancing women are finishing an oriental dance for the entertainment of the banqueters. The banquet table is sufficiently raised above the level of the stage to command the scene. While the dance is in progress, the Guests are noisy and hilarious, talking, drinking, clinking cups, etc., and*

commenting on the dancers. The Dancers run off after the dance, the Guests bang their cups on the table and shout applause and the music stops. Then a hush passes along the table as the attention of the Guests is called to ALEXANDER. *He is sitting with his head bent forward, his forehead resting in his hand, quite oblivious to surroundings and apparently deep in meditation. There is a moment or two of hushed silence in contrast with the preceding uproar as attention is riveted on* ALEXÂNDER. *Finally* CLITUS, *who sits at the extreme* L., *of table on a couch slightly higher than those next to him, rises and addresses the assembly. On the extreme* R. *is* LEONNATUS *on a couch to match that of* CLITUS—*these two being masters of ceremony of the banquet. On one side of* ALEXANDER *sits* HEPHESTION, *on the other* PEUCESTAS.

CLITUS. (*Rising*) O Macedonians, and allied Greeks, it seems fitting now that we should retire and leave our King in solitude, since it is evident our company is no longer pleasing to him. (*The banqueters nod assent, as if acknowledging reluctantly that it is their duty to retire. While* CLITUS *is speaking,* ALEXANDER *rouses himself and looks about in a half dazed way, like a man coming out of a trance and not yet fully comprehending*) But before we go, it seems fitting that we should fill our cups and drink once more in honor of the great victory which this day commemorates. (*The Cup-Bearers pour wine, the Soldiers hold their cups calling in hushed tones, "A toast—yes!" "Issus!" "Alexander!" "Issus!"*)—To the battle of Issus and to our fearless and conquering King,—the great son of a great father,—Alexander, of Macedon!

(*All drink.*)

ALEXANDER. (*Rising and protesting*) Clitus! My soldiers and my friends! Be seated—be seated all of you! (*They all sink down in their seats*) I thank you in the name of my father, for myself, and for all our soldiers who have fallen in battle that we might live to conquer Persia.—I would not have you leave me yet—remain in your places and let the festivities continue.

LEONNATUS. O Alexander—we have sat with you before at many a feast—and it is evident to us now that you are not yourself to-night—some secret thought is troubling you.

ALEXANDER. I will tell you what it is that troubles me. I had a dream last night which seemed both strange and ominous. A great black bird flew over me as I slept and circled in the air above my head. In its talons it carried a dove. The black bird came ever closer to me, and at last I threw my javelin at it. It loosed its hold upon the dove which fluttered down and lighted on my breast. Then I seemed to sleep again, when suddenly I waked and found the great bird circling close upon me. I seized my sword and hurled it through the vile thing's heart. It closed its wings and fell upon me like a stone—striking me senseless to the ground. And, as I fell, I saw the dove was dead.—I told my dream to Aristander who is wise above all men in interpreting signs. (*To attendants*) Let Aristander enter. He has made sacrifice and now he waits to tell the meaning of this prodigy.

(*Enter* ARISTANDER, *the aged soothsayer.*)

ARISTANDER. O King—I have scanned the smoking entrails and I have pondered well concerning your dream. Thus I interpret it:—The black bird means your enemies, who gather strength while you remain here, as it were, in sleep. The dove signi-

fies the Mallian fortress which they will relinquish to you at the first attack. But they will seek to attack you again unawares. You will end their resistance with the sword and the Mallian fortress will be destroyed. Your loss of consciousness implies that your soldiers will be much fatigued after this last great victory and you will give them rest. The signs are all favorable.

(*The effects of the poison have been working on* ALEXANDER, *and when he rises now, he is tottering with weakness.*)

ALEXANDER. I thank you, Aristander, for your words of wisdom. I—I—am not myself—to-night—I—I would be alone—but first—one more toast. Bessus still lives—drink that I may live—to—punish—Bessus!—(*The wine spills from the cup which falls with a clatter and* ALEXANDER *sinks down limply on the table, amid general consternation and chaos.* HEPHESTION *and* PEUCESTAS *raise him and support him. Others remove a portion of the table from in front of* ALEXANDER *and as this is done a seat is moved* C. ALEXANDER *recovers somewhat—straightens himself with effort—looks about and puts his hand to his head*) It is nothing, my friends,—Be not alarmed. Leave me. (*All go off quietly in awe, he turns to* HEPHESTION *and* PEUCESTAS) Hephestion—Peucestas—there's something I would say to you. (*He sits on seat* C., *rests his head on his hand with eyes turned to the ground. When the stage is clear he lifts his head slowly and looks at* HEPHESTION, *then at* PEUCESTAS) A fever burns me.

PEUCESTAS. (*Going to speak*) Alexander——

ALEXANDER. (*Checking him with a gesture*) I know better than Aristander the meaning of my dream. Its message is quite clear to me.—You are

my closest friends—my ablest counsellors—together you must be the hope of all my mighty empire—if what I fear should come to pass.

HEPHESTION. (*Going to speak*) Alexander——

ALEXANDER. (*Checking him with a gesture*) I will have much to say to you—But first there's something I would have you do for me—(*He looks from one to the other—hesitating*) Peucestas—go to Roxana—tell her Alexander is not well—speak to her gently—and bring her to me—Go——

(PEUCESTAS *goes out quickly.*)

CLITUS. (*Entering*) Your physicians wait to see you.

ALEXANDER. I have no faith in them and I have always scorned to use their drugs. I will not listen to their learned gabble now.

CLITUS. Alexander——?

ALEXANDER. I will not see them, now. Tell them so. (CLITUS *goes out*) What the gods have willed is sure to come to pass.—Hephestion—that great black bird that flew about my head—and struck me with its flapping wings—came to announce my death.

HEPHESTION. Alexander!—no! The gods will never let you die!

ALEXANDER. There is no use to rail against the gods—That bird meant death. And I believe the dove was meant to signify Roxana. Hephestion, you do not know how much I love Roxana. I hoped to conquer her. I wished to marry her and make her Queen of all the world. (HEPHESTION *shows astonishment*) Yes—I wished it, but I failed in that—I could not conquer her. Ah—well—no mortal man can have his hopes all realized. The gods would envy him. (ROXANA *enters with* PEUCESTAS. PEUCESTAS *and* HEPHESTION *drop back a*

little while ROXANA *comes forward*) Ah—Roxana —you are welcome here—Will you come closer? (*She moves closer*) So—(*He pauses and gazes at her with admiration*) Do you remember, I told you once that I would always like to have you near me—just to gaze upon. Well now I wish it even more than I did then. I did not send for you to tell you that—no—it's something very different. I'm going to let you go away from me—far away—

(ROXANA *thrills and starts and looks at him questioningly.*)

ROXANA. (*Under her breath*) Alexander——?

ALEXANDER. Yes—I fear a change is going to occur which will affect my soldiers. If you remained here, harm might come to you.

ROXANA. Where will you send me?

ALEXANDER. To your father. (*She thrills and starts and looks at him*) There is no other place.

ROXANA. When will you have me go:

ALEXANDER. To-morrow—If we delayed it might then be too late!

ROXANA. —Is this because—you are ill?

ALEXANDER. It is beginning now, but I foresee the end. The gods have willed it so.

ROXANA. (*In a hushed tearful voice*) Alexander——?

ALEXANDER. There's one thing more—that I must speak to you about. Bessus is still alive. Bessus!—(*His face shows suffering*)—You know what he has done—You know my vow to punish him—Suppose he is with your father, now—how can I send you there? It is hard enough that I must give you up. I could not do it if I loved you less, Roxana—I cannot let you go to marry Bessus—don't ask that! I cannot!——

ROXANA. When I have told my father what I

know, he will not wish it—I am sure he will not wish it.

ALEXANDER. And if he does, what then? Besides, there is your oath—are you not bound by that?

ROXANA. I swore that I would marry no one else, in disobedience to my father's will. I will keep that oath—but I will not be Bessus' wife!

ALEXANDER. Roxana!—do you promise that?

ROXANA. If you release me now and send me freely to my father—no man will ever call me wife.

ALEXANDER. Roxana—? (*He holds out his hand to her*) Roxana!—(*She comes to him and takes his hand, he looks at her long and lovingly*) Roxana. I did not ask so much. But you have said it. Now I am almost glad to let you go. My guards will take you safely all the way. Hephestion shall see to it. My thoughts will follow you until the end. And if you ever think of me, in time to come, remember this: You are the only woman that I ever loved and I have tried to treat you worthily.—I could not bear to part with you and yet I let you go—farewell, Roxana——

ROXANA. Why must you die?

ALEXANDER. The gods have willed it so.

ROXANA. Your hands are strangely cold.

ALEXANDER. A fever burns me.

ROXANA. (*Amazed*) A fever?——

ALEXANDER. My head is on fire.

ROXANA. Your head!—and yet your hands—(*She stops suddenly, looks at him strangely, then stares before her, seized by a great thought*) Oh—! (*She goes to him quickly and decidedly—feels his hands*)

ALEXANDER. Roxana? (*She puts her hand on his forehead—looks at him closely*) Roxana!—(ROXANA *has "business"—recognizing the symptoms*)

ROXANA. I know what 'tis that takes your strength away! The gods be praised who sent me here in time! You will not die, for I can save you!

ALEXANDER. You—Roxana?

ROXANA. I'll come back quickly—I will save you! (*She goes out*)

(HEPHESTION *comes down to* ALEXANDER.)

HEPHESTION. Alexander——

ALEXANDER. Hephestion——

HEPHESTION. Aristander is without. He bears good news. He swears your life is not in danger and no harm will come to you. He has just made new sacrifice and he affirms the omens are all favorable.

ALEXANDER. Roxana spoke strange words of hope. She is the dove, you know—that fluttered to my breast—and yet I seemed to feel the touch of death!

HEPHESTION. To-morrow you'll be well again! (*An attendant enters*)—Well?

ATTENDANT. A messenger has come from Amyntas. He insisted this should be placed without delay in the King's hands. (*He hands message to* HEPHESTION *and goes out*)

ALEXANDER. Read, Hephestion.

HEPHESTION. (*Reading*) "Beware of Roxana —She is false. She seeks to poison you."

(*His voice hushes on the last words and he stares at* ALEXANDER *as if thunderstruck.* ALEXANDER *reaches out and takes the message which* HEPHESTION *hands him.*)

ALEXANDER. (*Reading*) "Beware of Roxana. She is false. She seeks to poison you." (*He stares*

before him thoughtfully, lifts his eyes to HEPHESTION, *looks down at the paper again, then rises from his seat and stands erect as* ROXANA *enters carrying a small cup.* HEPHESTION *sees her as she enters*)

HEPHESTION. (*To* ALEXANDER) Roxana——

ALEXANDER. (*Silencing him*) Sh!—(*He waves him back*) Roxana——

ROXANA. (*Crossing to him and holding out cup*) Here is the medicine. Drink it, sire——

ALEXANDER. (*Takes cup, then hands her the message*) Read—!

(ROXANA, *much puzzled, takes the message and reads.*)

ROXANA. (*Reading*) "Beware of Roxana. She is false. She seeks to poison you." (ALEXANDER *watches her closely. As she finishes she utters a smothered exclamation of awe, then raises her eyes to him*) Oh——

ALEXANDER. This is my answer! (*He drains the cup.* ROXANA *looks at him almost with adoration, she totters and falls on her knees before him*)

Curtain.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE: *Terrace by night. Same set as* ACT II., SCENE I.

DISCOVERED: EVADNE *and* SPITAMENES.

SPITAMENES. I have a man below who watches by the gate. If any one approaches he will warn me.

(EVADNE *goes up-stage and looks down below.* SPITAMENES *goes* L., *and peers through the palace entrance.*)

EVADNE. He is there.

SPITAMENES. Where is Roxana?

EVADNE. In her room alone. She's done nothing all day but seclude herself and pray to the gods.

SPITAMENES. I must see her.

EVADNE. No.

SPITAMENES. Bessus wills it so.

EVADNE. She will not hear me mention Bessus' name. She suspects 'twas Bessus who gave the poison to Iolas and tempted him with bribes to use it.

SPITAMENES. Iolas killed himself before the guards could seize him.

EVADNE. I know.

SPITAMENES. There is no clue to tell how he came by the poison.

EVADNE. Roxana knew it could only come from me or Eurylocus. The old man would not lie to her so I was forced to tell her how I gave it to a Persian woman whose master beat her brutally and had killed her child.

SPITAMENES. What matter if she knew the truth?

EVADNE. She would not have me near her, then! She'd cast me off.

SPITAMENES. Evadne—listen:—When the sun rises on Bactra to-morrow morning, Bessus will be safely on his way to the Mallians. I accompany him and he has consented that you go with us. Do you wish to go and be my wife as soon as we are welcomed by the Mallians?

EVADNE. (*Going to him*) Spitamenes!——

SPITAMENES. Then, two hours before the dawn you must steal out by the secret way and I will join you behind the Temple of Phoebus.

EVADNE. Yes.

SPITAMENES. No matter what Roxana does or says, promise me that you will come?

EVADNE. I will.

SPITAMENES. Now go to Roxana (EVADNE *hesitates*) and bid her come. Tell her Spitamenes bears a message from her King! (EVADNE *goes out* L. SPITAMENES *moves up and looks off, cautiously*)

(*In a moment* ROXANA *enters followed by* EVADNE.)

ROXANA. (*To* SPITAMENES) You bear a message for me?

SPITAMENES. Bessus, who is your King and mine, has planned to go to-morrow to the Mallian Rock.

ROXANA. Ah? Then I am glad. A King of Persia—whoever that King may be—should scorn to remain in hiding when war is in his land. His place is with his soldiers, at their head.

SPITAMENES. That is not all. Bessus purposes to take you with him.

ROXANA. To take me?——

SPITAMENES. He has a plan by which it may be done with little risk to him or you.

ROXANA. I do not wish to know his plan.

SPITAMENES. He is our King and he commanded me.

ROXANA. (*After hesitation*) Well?——

SPITAMENES. Alexander is afraid to risk his all against your father, and the Mallians.

ROXANA. That is not true. Alexander is above such fear.

SPITAMENES. I speak as Bessus says.

ROXANA. Then Bessus knows that what he says is false.

SPITAMENES. Alexander has a hope of tempting Oxyartes to a peaceable surrender with honeyed words of friendship. Already he has sent two messengers with offerings of peace, but Oxyartes would not deign to answer them and yesterday the messengers returned.

ROXANA. 'Twas generous of Alexander to offer peace.

SPITAMENES. It is a trick! He has no thought to keep his word.

ROXANA. You cannot name a single time that he has even broken it! (SPITAMENES *dismisses the argument with an apologetic gesture*) Come to your message if you must speak on.

SPITAMENES. Alexander has agreed to send "Tigranes" as a special envoy to the Mallian Rock to plead with Oxyartes for surrender.

ROXANA. I see. He sends "Tigranes" because "Tigranes" says he was my father's friend and ally.

SPITAMENES. Just so. "Tigranes" starts at dawn and no one accompanies him except myself and some attendants of our race.

ROXANA. So Bessus will go forth as Alexander's messenger!

SPITAMENES. If you will leave the palace tonight—Evadne may go with you—Bessus gives con-

sent. I will accompany you to a safe place beyond the Southern gates. Horses will be there and we will join you when we are safely on our way.

ROXANA. I see.

SPITAMENES. Before your absence is discovered we will be beyond the reach of all pursuit.

ROXANA. That is your message?

SPITAMENES. Yes.

ROXANA. Then tell Bessus, simply, that I cannot go with him.

SPITAMENES. The King commands.

ROXANA. A king who hides his name and does the bidding of another king—must temper his commands. He is not master here. I cannot go with him.

SPITAMENES. You will not.

ROXANA. (*Looking at him sternly*) Tell him what I said. (*She goes up a step thinking.* EVADNE *and* SPITAMENES *exchange glances.* ROXANA *turns to* EVADNE) Evadne, I have spoken only for myself. I would not keep you here against your will.

EVADNE. I see your heart has turned against me, because I do not smile upon our enemies.

ROXANA No—Evadne—I love you still—and I would always like to have you near me.

EVADNE. (*Insincerely*) Then I will stay with you!

ROXANA. (*With joyful surprise*) Evadne!

EVADNE. As long as you have need of me how could I go and leave you?

(ROXANA *turns and looks at* SPITAMENES—*as much as to say "You have your answer."*)

SPITAMENES. Then I will take my leave.

(ROXANA *turns up-stage. As soon as her back is*

turned, EVADNE *goes to* SPITAMENES *and assures him that she means to fly with him. He looks toward* ROXANA *and* EVADNE *puts her fingers to her lips enjoining him to silence and intimating that she knows what she is about. She goes with* SPITAMENES *to the secret door, he turns as he is about to descend and whispers.*)

SPITAMENES. (*Whispering*) Behind the Temple of Phoebus?

EVADNE. Yes. (*He kisses her hand and exits hurriedly*)

ROXANA. (*Coming down*) Evadne—your heart is truer than I feared it was.

EVADNE. If you would only share your thoughts with me, as you once did!

ROXANA. (*Half to herself*) What am I to do? What am I to do?

EVADNE. What do you wish to do?

ROXANA. I wish that everyone might know the truth!

EVADNE. About what?

ROXANA. About everything—about Bessus, about Alexander—about myself!—If I could only see my father!

EVADNE. See him, then! Take me with you and we'll go to-night with Bessus!

ROXANA. I cannot go with Bessus.

EVADNE. Why not?

ROXANA. Alexander trusts me and believes in me.

EVADNE. Bah!

ROXANA. Alexander loves me.

EVADNE. What if he does?

ROXANA. You do not understand. I've struggled with myself—I've tried to fight it down—I've said

it was impossible—what is the use? I love him, Evadne!

EVADNE. (*Scornfully*) Ah! Indeed!

ROXANA. Don't rail at me. 'Twill do no good. My love has grown and grown in spite of me!

EVADNE. Then I suppose when he comes here to-night—you mean to tell him who Tigranes is?

ROXANA. That I cannot do. But I can tell my father who he is and what he's done. My father does not know that Bessus is a coward and a regicide. He does not know that Alexander is a wise and generous King who seeks to spread not death but life and hope and greater happiness through all this vast domain which he has conquered. Here is a letter. I've told him all and I have prayed the gods to make him cease a hopeless cause and welcome Alexander as his friend and Emperor.

EVADNE. How will you send the letter?

(ROXANA *moves about a moment, thinking.*)

ROXANA. It must go to-night.

EVADNE. You'll speak of it to Alexander?

ROXANA. That is what I meant to do

EVADNE. Exactly. He'll offer to send it—you'll give it to him and then he'll read it. Bessus and Spitamenes will be put to death and then you can plead you did not mean to play informer and betray your promised husband and your King.

ROXANA. Evadne!

EVADNE. A pretty plan! And yet you shudder when you speak of regicide!

ROXANA. Leave me. Go within.

EVADNE. I'll tell you this: I love Spitamenes and I intend to go with him to-night!

ROXANA. I gave you my consent to go.

EVADNE. If you dare give that letter to the Mace-

donian King, I may die for it, but first I'll find some way to let all Persia know what you have done. (*Exit* EVADNE L.)

(ROXANA *walks about thinking. She looks off* R., *then thinks again, hesitating. Then she comes to a sudden decision, and calls off* R.)

ROXANA. (*Calling*) Polymon!

POLYMON. (*Off* R.) Who calls?

ROXANA. (*Calling again*) Polymon!

POLYMON. (*Off* R.) I come. (*Enter* POLYMON R.) You called to me?

ROXANA. Polymon, I wish to ask a service of you.

POLYMON. Command me, Princess.

ROXANA. Here is a letter—I wish a trusty messenger to bear it with all speed to my father, Oxyartes, who holds the Mallian Rock.

POLYMON. A message to our enemies?

ROXANA. A message from a daughter to her father.

POLYMON. Does Alexander know of it?

ROXANA. Not yet. But when he knows, I promise you that he will thank me for it and he will not deny me when I ask for you some special mark of favor as a recompense.

POLYMON. Alexander commanded me to obey your least command as if you were our Queen.

ROXANA. Then I *command you* now to be my messenger.

POLYMON. —When would you have me start?

ROXANA. At once. (*She goes to hand him message*)—Wait—Where are your horses?

POLYMON. By my tent at the Northern gate.

ROXANA. Is one more speedy than the rest?

POLYMON. I have a horse which won a prize.

ROXANA. Then bring it here as quickly as you can! And say no word to anyone.

POLYMON. I will obey you. (POLYMON *kisses* ROXANA'S *hand as* ALEXANDER *enters up* L. C. ALEXANDER *pauses on seeing* POLYMON *and does not speak until* POLYMON *has gone off* R I E.)

ALEXANDER. (*Quietly*) Roxana——

ROXANA. (*Turning with a start*) Alexander—

ALEXANDER. Did I startle you?

ROXANA. I—I——

ALEXANDER. What troubles you?

ROXANA. Alexander—I have just asked Polymon to do a service for me——

ALEXANDER. (*Coldly*) He will not fail you. He is a good soldier——

ROXANA. I don't want to conceal anything from you. I wished to send a message to my father.

ALEXANDER. And did you hesitate to speak of that to me?

ROXANA. —I meant to tell you—then I—it occurred to me that you might thing it strange.

ALEXANDER. That you should wish to send a message to your father!

ROXANA. But suppose I could not tell you what was in the message——?

ALEXANDER. (*Gently and half playfully*) Ah?

ROXANA. I've prayed the gods all day to tell me what to do.

ALEXANDER. And they refused to answer you? Then will you let me speak for them?

ROXANA. You do not understand.

ALEXANDER. I understand enough.

ROXANA. You mean—because you know I love you now?

ALEXANDER. Roxana—Say those words again: I love you——?

ROXANA. I love you, Alexander.

ALEXANDER. Then cease to think of anything that troubles you. Put your faith in me! Remember

only that I love you—I loved you from the first and I will love you always!——

ROXANA. I only wish to do what you would have me do until the end of time.

ALEXANDER. Then you will be my wife?

ROXANA. How can I be your wife, when you must go to battle with my father?

ALEXANDER. I have not gone to battle with him yet.

ROXANA. Suppose that he defies you until you take his life! Could I be happy with you then?

ALEXANDER. If your father should meet his death in battle, I'd mourn for him and share your sorrow, but in the end I'm sure our love will bring us happiness.

ROXANA. (*Tearfully*) Oh, Alexander!——

ALEXANDER. As yet your father has not suffered any harm.

ROXANA. I know you sent two messengers to him to offer peace——

ALEXANDER. You heard——?

ROXANA. They have returned without an answer.

ALEXANDER. Who was it told you that?

(ROXANA *goes to tell him—then checks herself suddenly—realizing she was on the point of betraying* SPITAMENES' *visit and* BESSUS.)

ROXANA. Who—? Why—No!—I must not say!

ALEXANDER. Did Polymon presume——?

ROXANA. No——

ALEXANDER. Who was it, then?

ROXANA. I have no right to let you know.

ALEXANDER. Roxana—do you mistrust me still?

ROXANA. It is not that!

ALEXANDER. Well?——

ROXANA. There's just one thing which I am bound to hide from you.

ALEXANDER. I see.

ROXANA. Perhaps you'll think I should have told you, long ago. You may not love me then, because I have been false to you.

ALEXANDER. False!

ROXANA. I'll tell you to-morrow—to-morrow, I can tell you all.

ALEXANDER. Is Polymon concerned in this?

ROXANA. No.

ALEXANDER. There must be no deception in an officer.

ROXANA. If there is any fault, it is all mine. No blame must come to Polymon. Indeed I hoped that you would not refuse to honor him with some slight mark of favor——

(ALEXANDER *looks at her enquiringly—then he looks down thoughtfully—turning away a little. He looks back at* ROXANA *before speaking.*)

ALEXANDER. I will speak to Polymon!

ROXANA. (*Anxiously*) Not to-night!——

ALEXANDER. Ah!——

ROXANA. Now I have displeased you.

ALEXANDER. No.

ROXANA. You never frowned on me before.

ALEXANDER. I did not mean to frown.

ROXANA. And you speak coldly now.

ALEXANDER. Roxana!——

ROXANA. (*Tearfully*) What have I done!——

ALEXANDER. (*Taking her hand*) Roxana—have no fear—I love you from the bottom of my soul. I had a passing thought which troubled me—but I will think of it no more.

ROXANA. I cannot stand it when you frown on me.

ALEXANDER. Look at me. (*She looks at him tearfully. He gazes at her long and lovingly*) Do you see anything but love? (*She drops her head*

on his breast. He strokes it gently) There—there—now all is well. To-morrow you will tell me what it is that troubles you, and I will love you even more than I do now—(*She draws away and looks at him questioningly*) I only mean that each new day brings added love—and so I hope it will go on—as long as life remains to us.

ROXANA. I could not love you more than I do now.

ALEXANDER. Oh yes you could!

ROXANA. Then I will weary you with too much love.

ALEXANDER. You never will—But you must promise me one thing. After to-night—you'll never have another secret from me.

ROXANA. No—never!

ALEXANDER. I wish to know each thought that passes in your mind——

ROXANA. I understand. I wish it, too!

ALEXANDER. That is the only way that you can be all mine——

ROXANA. Alexander—you are a god!—no man was ever like you!——

ALEXANDER. Then do you promise me?

ROXANA. I promise——

ALEXANDER. Now it is growing late and we must not forget the message to your father. (ROXANA *rises—her expression changes*) I had already thought of that before I came.

ROXANA. You?——

ALEXANDER. Your father's friend, Tigranes, will start at dawn to join your father at the Mallian Rock. He is a Persian, a man of rank, your father's former ally, a fitting messenger to plead my cause. I've talked with him and he is confident that when your father learns how I will honor him more greatly than Darius did, he'll lay down arms and welcome me as Persia's Emperor.

ROXANA. Tigranes told you this?

ALEXANDER. He's waiting now to receive my last commands. I will send him here to you and you may give him freely what messages you wish and he will bear them safely to your father.

ROXANA. (*With dismay*) Tigranes!——

ALEXANDER. Well?

ROXANA. (*Going to speak then letting the sound die on her lips*) I—I——

ALEXANDER. Your secret will be safe with him—And he will be more welcome, to your father, because he is the bearer of your messages.

ROXANA. Must I do this?

ALEXANDER. What reason have you to refuse? (ROXANA *goes to speak, then checks herself*) I'll keep Tigranes here until you tell me all!

ROXANA. No! No!—I would not have him stay!

ALEXANDER. Then why——?

ROXANA. (*Seeking to conceal her thought*) I—it was Polymon I had in mind.

ALEXANDER. I will speak to Polymon.

ROXANA. Not to-night!——

ALEXANDER. I'll only tell him that your plans have changed and you no longer need his aid.

ROXANA. Wait until I've told you all——

ALEXANDER. (*After a pause*) So be it then. But I will send Tigranes to you now and he will bear your messages.

ROXANA. He will surely go at dawn?

ALEXANDER. Yes.

ROXANA. (*Firmly*) Then I will give him a message for my father!——

ALEXANDER. And after to-morrow, no more secrets?

ROXANA. No—No! Never!

ALEXANDER. Then fare you well, until to-morrow.

ROXANA. Until to-morrow. (*He goes to* R., *pauses, looks back lovingly at* ROXANA)

ALEXANDER. May the gods preserve you always as you are! Good-night, Roxana. (*Exit* ALEXANDER R. 1 E.)

(ROXANA *looks after him for a time after he is off. Then she comes back* C., *and sits thinking. A noise of horse's hoofs is head faintly. She starts, rouses herself, goes quickly up-stage and looks off below to see if it is* POLYMON. *The noise of hoofs become fainter and dies away.* ROXANA *takes out the message, opens it and sits again to read it over. She reads a moment in silence nodding her head approvingly, then she begins to read aloud.*)

ROXANA. (*Reading*) "Alexander is great and good, above all men. I am proud to own my love for him. Bessus is a coward and an assassin. I cannot betray him, yet my heart urges me to cry out to Alexander, "Tigranes is a serpent—strike him down! For he is Bessus!'" (*As she finishes* BESSUS *enters* R. 1 E. SPITAMENES *enters a moment later quietly and remains at steps* R. *As* ROXANA *sees* BESSUS, *she rises quickly, putting the message out of sight. She turns and looks at* BESSUS *defiantly. There is a moment's silence*)

BESSUS. Roxana—I will not waste words——

ROXANA. You have come for a message for my father——

BESSUS. No! I have come for you!

ROXANA. I gave my answer!

BESSUS. It is for me to command and you to obey! (ROXANA *gives signs of greater defiance and indignation*) I will not wait till morning—all is ready—I go to-night.

ROXANA. Then lose no time on the way, for to-morrow I will tell Alexander who you are!

BESSUS. You will tell Alexander nothing! (*Movement of scorn from* ROXANA) His day with you has passed! Henceforth you are mine!——

ROXANA. I will not judge you—that is for the gods. And so, farewell. (*She goes out* L.)

(BESSUS *looks after her fiercely—follows her over a little—he turns to* SPITAMENES *and beckons him over. As* SPITAMENES *comes, distant noise of singing and reveling is heard from the street —a band of revelers.* BESSUS *goes up-stage and looks off.* SPITAMENES *opens the door to secret way, then turns to* BESSUS, *waiting for a sign from him.* BESSUS, *after looking off, signifies that all is well. He comes down and joins* SPITAMENES L. C.)

BESSUS. We must make no noise. I will speak to her first and give her leave to go with us obediently. Then do you come behind her and stop her mouth with this. (*He hands* SPITAMENES *a small cloth. As* BESSUS *turns* L., *the noise of horse's hoofs is heard in distance coming nearer. He goes up, glances off, comes back and goes into palace, signing* SPITAMENES *to follow him. The horse's hoofs grow loud then stop. The sound of* BESSUS' *voice and then* ROXANA'*s is heard off* L.' *vaguely*) You go with me for I have willed it so!

ROXANA. (*Off* L., *indistinctly*) How dare you!

BESSUS. (*Off* L., *indistinctly*) I will take you then!

ROXANA. (*Off* L., *indistinctly*) I scorn your threats and I defy you!

(*Meanwhile* POLYMON *enters* R. 1 E. *He sees no one —comes* C. *He hears the voices off* L. *He goes* L., *as a scream is heard from* ROXANA *and the noise of a scuffle—something falling—and low*

excited exclamations from BESSUS *and* SPITAMENES. POLYMON *goes quickly to entrance* L., *and peers in—then he draws his sword and turns to shout off, up-stage.*)

POLYMON. (*Shouting*) Help! Help! To the rescue! (*He rushes off* L. *The clash of swords and hoarse shouts from* POLYMON *heard off* L. *Confused voices and noises—clanking of armor heard off* R., *and up-stage, supposedly from the street below—as guards and revellers come, in answer to the call. Then a body is heard to fall heavily off* L., *with the rattle of armor.* BESSUS *and* SPITAMENES *enter* L., *with drawn swords, half dragging and half carrying* ROXANA *who utters inarticulate cries through a bandage which covers her mouth.* EVADNE *follows them on and rushes across up-stage to look off. Then* POLYMON *staggers on* L., *wounded and reeling and brandishing his sword.* POLYMON *hoarsely*) Traitors! Beasts!

(BESSUS *turns and strikes him and he falls* L. C., *mortally wounded. At that moment Guards and Courtiers come on hurriedly up* L. C. *and* R. 1 E. *noisily.* BESSUS *and* SPITAMENES *leave* ROXANA *who gets the bandage off as* EVADNE *comes down.* ROXANA *is half strangled and fainting. She turns to* EVADNE.)

ROXANA. Evadne!—(*She supports herself on* EVADNE)

BRASIDAS. (*Entering up* L. C.) Hi! Stand back! What is the trouble? I am Brasidas!

(*At the same instant those on the Right draw back murmuring "Alexander! Alexander comes! Alexander!"* (ALEXANDER *enters* R. 1 E., *followed by attendants. All is hushed before him.*

He stops R. C., *in amazement—Situation and Picture.*)

ALEXANDER. What has happened here? Roxana, speak!

BESSUS. (*Quickly*) O King, the truth must be told!

ALEXANDER. Tigranes——?

BESSUS. (*Quickly*) I came here in obedience to your commands. No one was upon the terrace—all was silent. I proceeded to the apartment of the Princess Roxana. As I was about to enter I heard soft voices from the inner recess, mingling in words of love. I peered in and I beheld this soldier——

ALEXANDER. Polymon!

BESSUS. The Princess Roxana was with him——

ALEXANDER. Take care!——

BESSUS. Her head rested upon his shoulder while she listened to his words of love!

ALEXANDER. Oh!—(*He turns toward* ROXANA)

BESSUS. She saw me and screamed and this man rushed upon me with his drawn sword. I defended myself and struck him where he fell.

ALEXANDER. You lie!——

BESSUS. Bacurius will tell you if I speak the truth. I swear it by the gods!

(ALEXANDER *turns to* SPITAMENES.)

SPITAMENES. It is as Tigranes says, O King—I drew my sword to aid in his defence.

BRASIDAS. (*Breaking in*) Polymon loved her! I discovered that!

ALEXANDER. Oh!

BRASIDAS. I told Amyntas she was false.

ALEXANDER. Amyntas!——

BRASIDAS. He swore to warn you, so I held my tongue.

ALEXANDER. Oh!—Roxana? Speak!

(ROXANA *is so overcome that she is unable to utter a sound. She looks at* ALEXANDER *dumbly then slowly turns her gaze to* BESSUS *and* SPITAMENES—*finally she turns to* EVADNE.)

ROXANA. (*Almost inaudibly*) Evadne——?

EVADNE. (*Supporting her with pretended sympathy*) Roxana——

ALEXANDER. Speak!——

EVADNE. Do not punish her, O King! It was her weakness—nothing more!

ALEXANDER. (*In rage*) Oh!

EVADNE. She was not able to resist the love of Polymon——

ALEXANDER. (*Wildly*) Oh!—Oh! (*He looks at* ROXANA *as if he would strike her, or strangle her* ROXANA *stares about her in a dazed way—then goes to speak to* ALEXANDER)

ROXANA. Alexan———(*Her voice refuses to work*)

(ALEXANDER *gives her another wild look and breaks out, turning from her with a gesture.*)

ALEXANDER. Oh! ye gods! ye gods! (*He paces the stage like a wildman repeating this ejaculation.* ROXANA *totters and swoons.* BESSUS *and* SPITAMENES *go to her on either side to support her*)

EVADNE. O King—be merciful!

ALEXANDER. Out of my sight! Take her away! Take her to her room! Tigranes, take her! Take her to her room! Oh! Oh! (BESSUS, SPITAMENES *and* EVADNE *go off with* ROXANA) What am I now? What am I now? (*To guards, etc.*) Stand off and turn your backs on me! What is it now to be an

Emperor if I must come to this? Oh! Oh! Roxana! Roxana! (HEPHESTION *enters followed by* LEONNATUS *and* PEUCESTAS) Hephestion—you have not heard——!

HEPHESTION. Alexander——

ALEXANDER. The world is false! All false! Are you false, too, or are you still my friend, Hephestion?

HEPHESTION. What's happened?

ALEXANDER. What's happened?—Why nothing much that you'll think strange—A trifle that should not disturb men's minds. Another woman has proved false—that's all.

HEPHESTION. (*Under his breath*) Roxana—?

ALEXANDER. (*Breaking out*) No! It is not true! Roxana is not false! How could she? Roxana false? They lie to torture me! O Hephestion! Tell me that they lie and you do not believe them!

HEPHESTION. Alexander———

ALEXANDER. It is not true, I say! Roxana loves me!—She is pure as snow. She's innocent, I say! Am I not Alexander, whom she loves? Could she abandon me to play with Polymon? Polymon—? He came here for the message—nothing more—the message to her father—the message? Where is the message? Let me see the message! Let me see the message! The message, I say! The message!

(*Attendants and guards go about in search of the message. Some go off* L., *to* ROXANA'S *apartments.*)

BRASIDAS. (*Supporting* POLYMON) He's not dead! He lives! Polymon———!

ALEXANDER. Ah! (*He goes to* POLMON *fiercely —stoops down and seizes hold of him—lifting him*

in his grasp) Speak! Speak the truth! The truth I say—or I will strangle you! Speak! Speak!

POLYMON. (*Struggling feebly*) Roxana——

ALEXANDER. Tell me she is innocent!

POLYMON. The message——

ALEXANDER. Yes!——

POLYMON. Tigranes—(*He collapses*)

ALEXANDER. (*Shaking him*) Speak! Speak!—Ah! dead!—(*He shakes him*) dead! (*He lets him fall*)

(*An Attendant has picked up the message.* PEUCESTAS *has taken it from him and opened it.*)

PEUCESTAS. (*Looking at message*) Alexander!——

ALEXANDER. Ah! (*He seizes the message from* PEUCESTAS' *hands and reads*) Ah—Ah! "Alexander is great and good, above all men. I am proud to own my love for him!"—You hear Hephestion! She loves me!—She is innocent!—Bring her to me!—She's innocent!—(HEPHESTION *starts to go* L. *Confused voices and excitement are heard off* L. ALEXANDER *reads again*) "Bessus is a coward and an assassin"—Bessus!—"I cannot betray him, yet my heart urges me to cry out to Alexander—" "Tigranes is a serpent! Strike him down! For he is Bessus!"

(*The excitement and confusion off* L., *have risen to an uproar. Calls of "Alexander" "Alexander" are heard off* L. *Attendants and Guards come out in consternation—then* HEPHESTION.)

ALEXANDER. —Bessus! Tigranes is Bessus!

HEPHESTION. (*Excitedly*) He has escaped!

ALEXANDER. Escaped!—Where is Roxana?—(*He rushes off* L.)

HEPHESTION. The room is empty! They have taken Roxana with them!

ALEXANDER. (*Rushing back with sword drawn*) To horse! To horse! Bid the trumpets sound! (*The trumpets ring out*) To horse!

HEPHESTION. Alexander!

ALEXANDER. Roxana is innocent! She loves me! Bessus has her! To horse! To horse! The cry is Bessus and the Mallian Rock! We will not stop till I hold Bessus and the Mallian Rock! To horse! To horse! (*He rushes off* R. 1 E., *all following and shouting*)

Curtain.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I

SCENE:—*Outside the Mallian Rock. The fortified wall of the fortress running from* R. 2 E. *to up* R. C. *Rocks and barrenness with only a a little stunted shrubbery. A ridge of rocks on the stage, to give, if possible, the effect of a natural ditch, or precipice, between the stage ground and the fortress walls.*

DISCOVERED: *Before the curtain rises a storm is heard raging. The curtain rises to a dark picture lighted by flashes of lightning with heavy peals of thunder crashing out at intervals. A Sentry or Guard is seen on the walls, intermittently, then he disappears. Two unarmed Persians—messengers—are then seen on the wall. One of them is let down a rope from the wall and disappears in the ditch below. Then the rope is drawn up by the other, who disappears from view. After a minute, the First Persian who has been let down clambers into view over the rocks on stage. He gives a look back at rock then crouches out quickly* L., *over rocks. The storm gradually ceases and the stage grows a little lighter with the coming of dawn. Then a flare of trumpets, the noise of an approaching cavalry force is heard off* L., *not the conventional patter of wooden hoofs, but confused noises of armor, murmur of voices, tramping of horses, and, if possible, neighing of horses. Persian Guards reappear on the walls and look off* L.,

with excitement—some disappear from walls hurriedly. Confused noises and excitement are heard from town R., *and Guards crowd the walls.*

(CLITUS, LEONNATUS, PEUCESTAS *and other* MACEDONIAN OFFICERS *and* SOLDIERS *enters* L.)

CLITUS. There is no way that we can take the town without our towers and our battering rams.

LEONNATUS. The walls are built on solid rock. We cannot undermine them.

PEUCESTAS. We must scale them!

CLITUS. We have no ladders.

PEUCESTAS. Some ladders were put upon the horses. They came up just now.

LEONNATUS. They will not reach half way.

CLITUS. Alexander will have to wait until the main army comes and brings the engines.

PEUCESTAS. 'Twill take five days at least before the engines come.

CLITUS. Then we must wait five days.

PEUCESTAS. (*Looking off* L.) Sh! Alexander!—

(*Enter* ALEXANDER L., *clad in full armor. An attendant follows him, carrying his shield and two javelins.* HEPHESTILN *and other* OFFICERS *and soldiers follow him.*)

ALEXANDER. I do not wish to waste your lives in rashness, but I cannot wait until our heavy force arrives and brings us what we need to batter down these walls. Your courage must be tu ed to m if you would follow me and do as I command.

CLITUS. Our lives are nothing, Alexander! (*Signs and shouts of assent from all*) But you are our mighty King and all our hopes depend on you alone. Do not expose yourself to danger.

Command us what to do and we will do it for you. (*Shouts and approval from all*)

ALEXANDER. I have sent two messengers into the town to Oxyartes. If he will surrender Bessus into my hands I still am ready to make peace with him. If he fails to surrender Bessus within one hour, he seals the doom of every one within the walls. Roxana is the only one who shall be spared—and I have vowed to the gods to hold her in my arms before the sun has set. I wait now for Oxyartes' answer.

CLITUS. How can we scale the walls until the ladders and the engines come?

(*Two ladders are brought in. Each is made of three smaller ladders bound together.*)

ALEXANDER. Here are ladders.

CLITUS. (*Despairingly*) Two ladders!——

ALEXANDER. And if we had but one,—is there a Macedonian who would shrink to follow me upon it to those walls? (*Shouts: "No!" "No!" "we are ready!" "Let us go!" etc.*)

(*The barbarian* MESSENGER *who has been let down from the wall at opening of act comes out suddenly from behind rocks and flings himself on the ground before* ALEXANDER.)

MESSENGER. O King!——

(*General movement, Soldiers drawing swords as if to kill him.* ALEXANDER *checks them with a gesture.*)

ALEXANDER. Whence come you? Speak!

MESSENGER. I came over the walls to bring you this from the Princess Roxana!——

ALEXANDER. (*Taking message from Barbarian*) Roxana!——(*He reads*) "I told my father all—He refused to fight against you. He defied Bessus and Bessus has put him in chains. My father will be put to death to-morrow unless I marry Bessus. I love you. Roxana."

(*As* ALEXANDER *finishes,* BESSUS *appears upon the walls, clad in armor and looking proud and defiant. A shout goes up from behind the walls.*)

BESSUS. (*On the wall*) Alexander—I salute you—When you send messengers to beg for peace—know that I am King of all men here and messengers must come to me. Oxyartes is my slave! I will show you how I treat your messengers, and if you send more, I will treat them likewise. I defy you and I spit on you! If you want Roxana, come and take her! (*As he finishes speaking, he disappears. The two Macedonian messengers are let down from the walls by ropes and hang suspended in the air. They are dead and their bodies are bound hand and foot and the rope that they hang from apparently goes round their necks, but really is fastened from behind*)

(*A great shout of rage goes up from the Macedonians.* ALEXANDER *shouts his commands above the din and general confusion.*)

ALEXANDER. (*Shouts to his men*) To the walls! To the walls! Put up the ladders! (*The ladders are put up against the walls.* ALEXANDER *takes his shield and javelin from his attendant and starts to the ladders*) To the walls! Follow me! (*The Soldiers try to restrain him and shout to him.* CLITUS, PEUCESTAS *and* LEONNATUS *shoutings* "*Alex-*

ander—do not expose yourself!" "We will go!" "Alexander—no! Let us go!" ALEXANDER *pays no heed to them. He rushes to the nearest ladder and starts up it. The Officers and Soldiers crowd after him uttering great shouts of rage and fear for* ALEXANDER'S *life.* PEUCESTAS *and* LEONNATUS *are next behind him*)

(*There is a brief fight from the top of the ladders with the Soldiers on the walls. Those in front of* ALEXANDER *give way and he gains a footing on the walls—followed by* PEUCESTAS *and* LEONNATUS. *Those on the other ladder are still fighting, as both ladders crack and break and the Macedonians with great shouts of despair are seen to totter and cling to the falling ladders—some of them dropping down into the ditch below. Lights out and change of set.*)

END OF ACT IV. SCENE I.

SCENE II.

SCENE: *Inside the walls of the Mallian fortress. The wall runs from down* R. *to up* R. C. *Down* R., *is a massive gate in the wall—which can be burst open. A rocky ledge rises up* L. C., *with a temple of some sort on it. There is a large tree trunk* R. C., *on a rising mound.*

TIME: *Bright sunshine.*

DISCOVERED: ALEXANDER, PEUCESTAS *and* LEONNATUS *are still on the walls—fighting with some Persians there. Down below is a great crowd of Persian Soldiers in a surging shouting mass.*

There are great shouts from the MACEDONIANS *off* R., *and after a few moments, there are heavy poundings supposedly at the gate* R. *The din should be terrific—overwhelming. No word is spoken in this scene—the effects and the progress of the fight being matters which must depend to a great extent upon the construction of the set and rehearsals.*

*After a moment's fighting on the walls—*ALEXANDER *comes down stone steps which lead to walls. He is followed by* LEONNATUS *and* PEUCESTAS. *The leading Persians are knocked back and recoil before the fierceness of* ALEXANDER'S *blows.* ALEXANDER *and his two companions make their stand on the mound* R. C., *about the tree. There they resist onslaught after onslaught of the Persians.* LEONNATUS *is the first of the three to fall. He is down* L., *side of the tree. Then* PEUCESTAS *falls, and* ALEXANDER *is left alone to meet the onslaught.*

SPITAMENES *attacks him and after a fierce struggle* ALEXANDER *kills him, but is growing exhausted, himself—his foot slips and he sinks down on one knee, covering himself with his shield. A great shout goes up from the Persians who are about to rush on him in a mass, as* BESSUS *gets in front of them and waves them back—shouting "He is mine!"* BESSUS *rushes on* ALEXANDER *while he is still down.* ALEXANDER *manages to raise himself with great effort and finally strikes* BESSUS *down. Just as the Persians with wild shouts start to overwhelm him—the gate* R., *is burst open and the Macedonian Phalanx with their lances and shields locked together in rows—rush in led by* HEPHESTION *and* CLITUS. *They sweep the*

PERSIANS *from the stage. There is a little scattered fighting here and there as more Macedonians keep rushing in through the gates with great shouts of "Alexander!" "Alexander!"*

CLITUS *and* HEPHESTION *go to* ALEXANDER *and support him as the crowd of Macedonians presses round. Then as some Macedonians come back from* L., *with Persian captives—* ROXANA *enters* L. *Before she enters there are shouts of "Roxana!" "Roxana!" off* L. ALEXANDER *comes down a little as* ROXANA *enters. He is* R. C. *She comes on* L., *and stops* L. C. *These two stand a moment—looking at each other. Then* ALEXANDER *opens his arms to her and calls "Roxana!" She rushes to his arms* C.

(*Great shouts of triumph from all.*)

Picture and Curtain.

0 015 929 415 8